MARVEL COMICS
THE INFINITY CRUSADE
$2.50 US
$3.15 CAN
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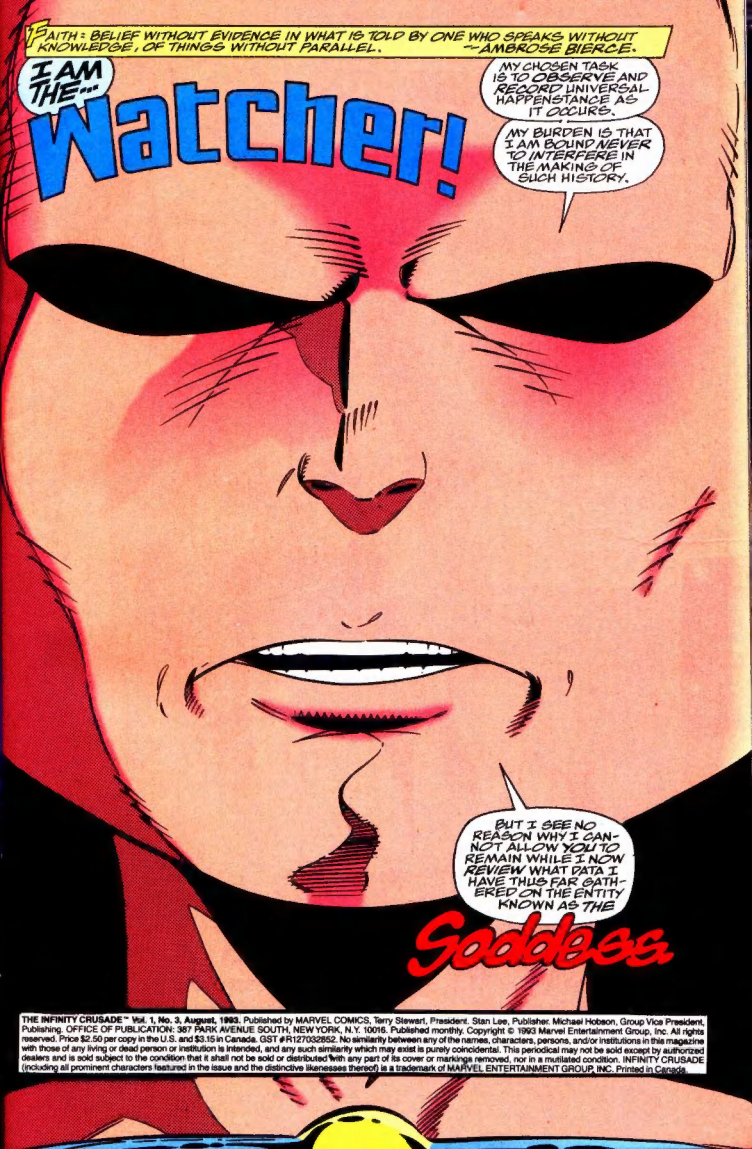
UK £1.85
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IF YOU WANT TO STOP THE GODDESS...
...YOU'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH ME!
DIRECT EDITION
00311
MEPHISTO, WARLOCK & THANOS--
THE UNHOLY TRINITY!

FAITH: BELIEF WITHOUT EVIDENCE IN WHAT IS TOLD BY ONE WHO SPEAKS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, OF THINGS WITHOUT PARALLEL. --AMBROSE BIERCE.


I AM THE...
Watcher!
MY CHOSEN TASK IS TO OBSERVE AND RECORD UNIVERSAL HAPPENSTANCE AS IT OCCURS.
MY BURDEN IS THAT I AM BOUND NEVER TO INTERFERE IN THE MAKING OF SUCH HISTORY.
BUT I SEE NO REASON WHY I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO REMAIN WHILE I NOW REVIEW WHAT DATA I HAVE THUS FAR GATHERED ON THE ENTITY KNOWN AS THE
Goddess

THE INFINITY CRUSADE™ Vol. 1, No. 3, August, 1993. Published by MARVEL COMICS, Terry Stewart, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $2.50 per copy in the U.S. and $3.15 in Canada. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. INFINITY CRUSADE (including all prominent characters featured in the issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. Printed in Canada.

WITHIN A SPECTACULAR HIDEAWAY ON THE SURFACE OF EARTH'S MOON, THE MYSTERIOUS WATCHER RECEIVES THREE RATHER UNUSUAL GUESTS: REED RICHARDS, IRON MAN AND THE VISION.

The DAMNED

THE GODDESS APPEARS TO BE BROADCASTING A UNIQUE WAVE-LENGTH OF TELEPATHIC ENERGY ACROSS THE LENGTH OF THE GALAXY.

SHE OPERATES ON A FREQUENCY EVEN I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH.

BUT THE EFFECTS OF THE EMANATIONS ARE CLEARLY APPARENT.

I WAS ENGAGED IN STUDYING THIS ARMED CONFLICT WHEN THE GODDESS'S EMISSIONS FIRST BECAME EVIDENT.

THOSE ARE SHI'AR AND SKRULL WARRIORS SKIR-MISHING.

I RECOGNIZE THE SPACE SECTOR.

THIS BATTLE'S TAKING PLACE A GOOD THIRTY LIGHT YEARS FROM HERE.

TOOK PLACE.

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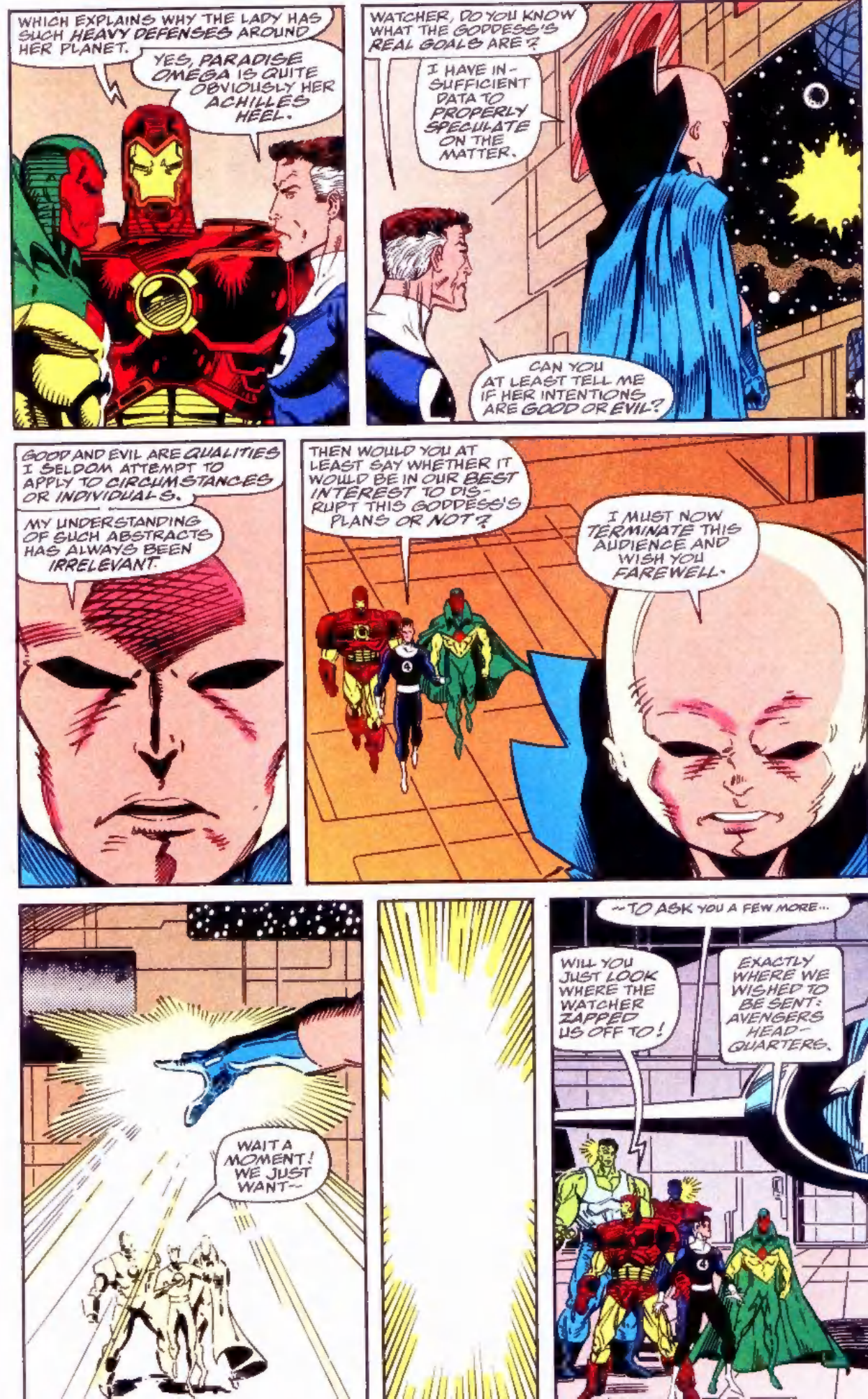
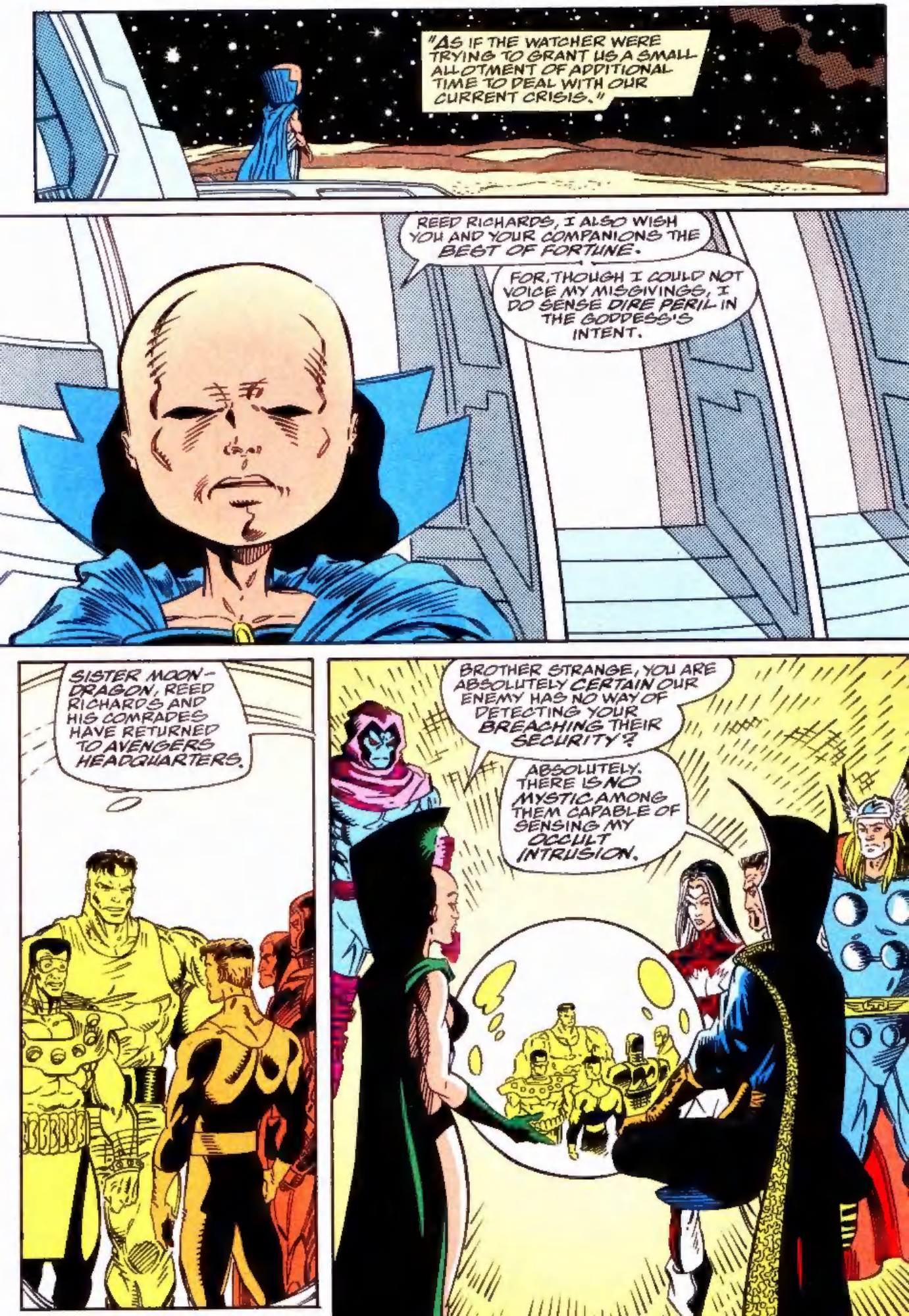
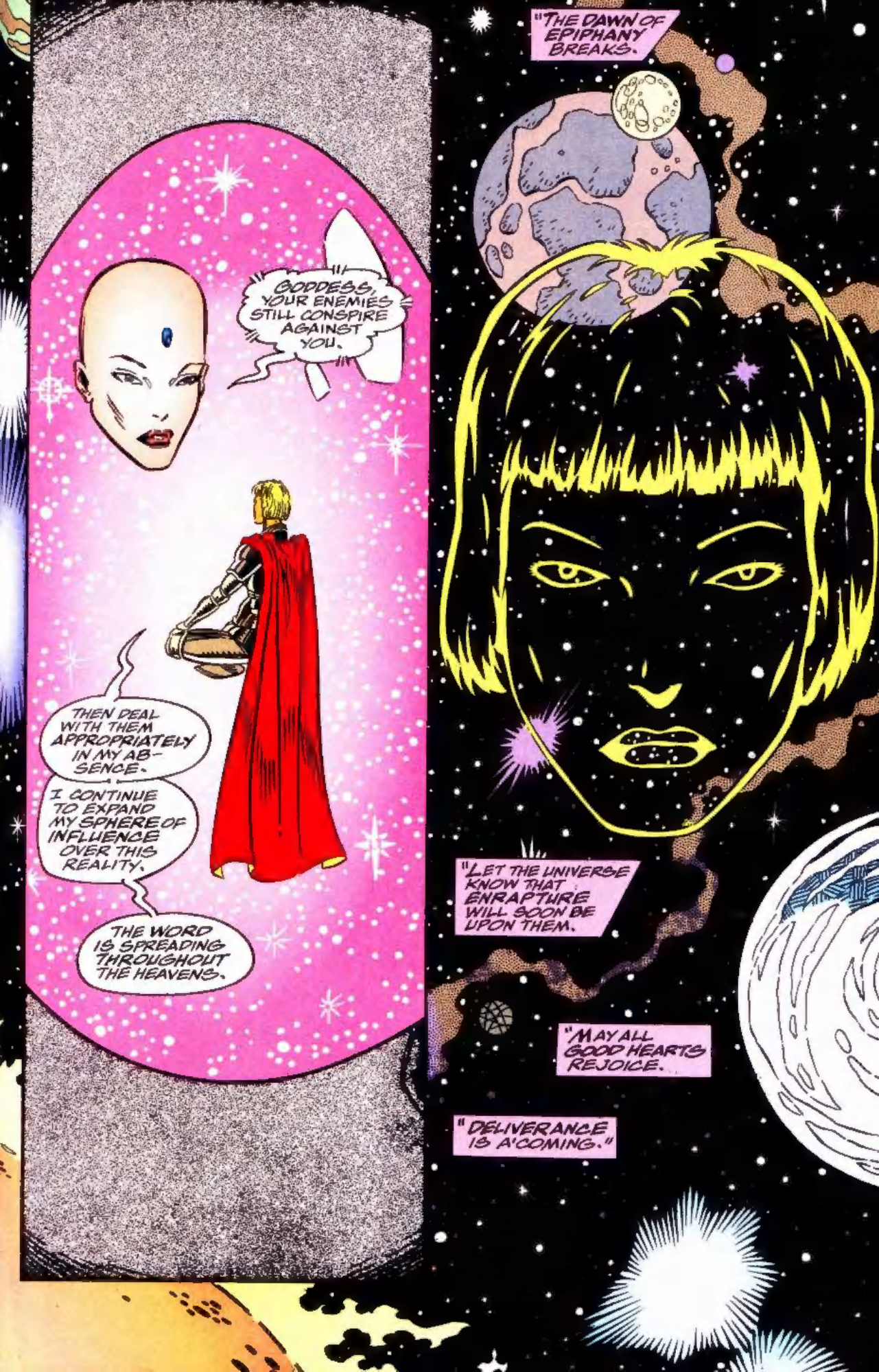
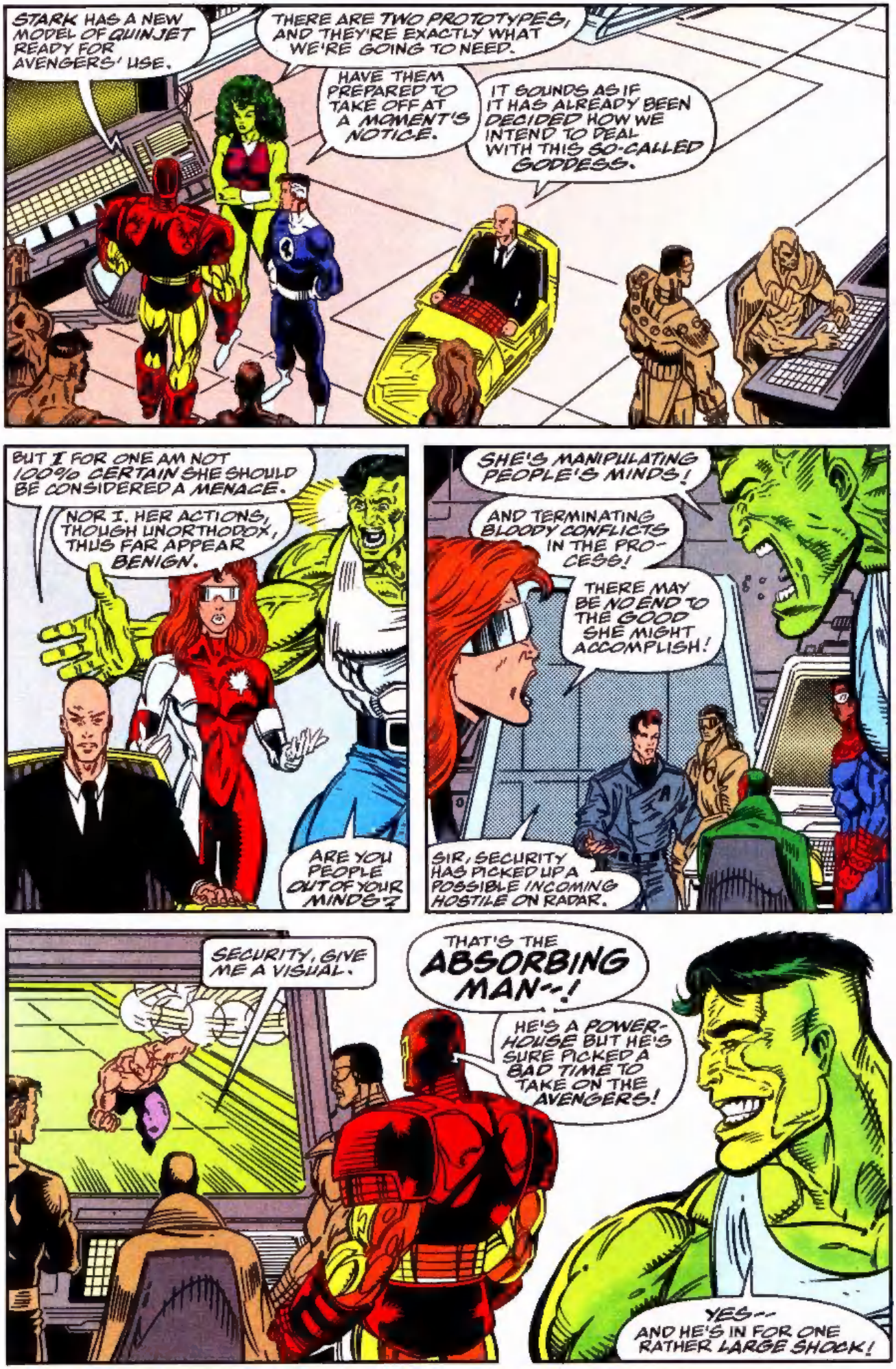
THE PSYCHIC WAVES WASHED OVER THIS SCENE SOME THREE EARTH HOURS AGO.
AMAZING! YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEE THE CHANGE COMING OVER THEM!
THEY'RE BEING BRAIN-WASHED, AREN'T THEY?
THE TERM CONVERTED MIGHT PROVE MORE ACCURATE.
MY INSTRUMENTATION THEN RECORDED MARKED ALTERATIONS IN THE BRAIN-WAVE ACTIVITY OF ALL PRESENT AT THIS EVENT.
THEY JUST STOPPED IN MID-BATTLE AND HEADED HOME?? INCREDIBLE!
SCARY.
THE GODDESS SEEMS TO BE BRINGING MUCH-NEEDED PEACE TO THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.
BY TAMPERING WITH EVERY-ONE'S MIND.
I TAKE IT YOU DON'T APPROVE?
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS WHY NONE OF US SEEMS TO BE TURNING INTO A LOVE ZOMBIE?
GIVEN HALF A CHANCE I'D STILL REPULSOR-BLAST THIS "GODDESS".
I CAN ONLY ASSUME THE GODDESS'S TRANSMISSIONS ARE LONG-RANGED IN NATURE.
EARTH AND ITS MOON MUST BE TOO CLOSE TO THE SOURCE OF THE TRANS-MISSION TO BE AFFECTED.


WHICH EXPLAINS WHY THE LADY HAS SUCH HEAVY DEFENSES AROUND HER PLANET.
YES, PARADISE OMEGA IS QUITE OBVIOUSLY HER ACHILLES HEEL.
WATCHER, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE GODDESS'S REAL GOALS ARE?
I HAVE INSUFFICIENT DATA TO PROPERLY SPECULATE ON THE MATTER.
CAN YOU AT LEAST TELL ME IF HER INTENTIONS ARE GOOD OR EVIL?
GOOD AND EVIL ARE QUALITIES I SELDOM ATTEMPT TO APPLY TO CIRCUMSTANCES OR INDIVIDUALS.
MY UNDERSTANDING OF SUCH ABSTRACTS HAS ALWAYS BEEN IRRELEVANT.
THEN WOULD YOU AT LEAST SAY WHETHER IT WOULD BE IN OUR BEST INTEREST TO DISRUPT THIS GODDESS'S PLANS OR NOT?
I MUST NOW TERMINATE THIS AUDIENCE AND WISH YOU FAREWELL.
WAIT A MOMENT! WE JUST WANT--
--TO ASK YOU A FEW MORE...
WILL YOU JUST LOOK WHERE THE WATCHER ZAPPED US OFF TO!
EXACTLY WHERE WE WISHED TO BE SENT: AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS.


"AS IF THE WATCHER WERE TRYING TO GRANT US A SMALL ALLOTMENT OF ADDITIONAL TIME TO DEAL WITH OUR CURRENT CRISIS."
REED RICHARDS, I ALSO WISH YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS THE BEST OF FORTUNE.
FOR, THOUGH I COULD NOT VOICE MY MISGIVINGS, I DO SENSE DIRE PERIL IN THE GODDESS'S INTENT.
SISTER MOON-DRAGON, REED RICHARDS AND HIS COMRADES HAVE RETURNED TO AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS.
BROTHER STRANGE, YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN OUR ENEMY HAS NO WAY OF DETECTING YOUR BREACHING THEIR SECURITY?
ABSOLUTELY. THERE IS NO MYSTIC AMONG THEM CAPABLE OF SENSING MY OCCULT INTRUSION.


"THE DAWN OF EPIPHANY BREAKS.
GODDESS, YOUR ENEMIES STILL CONSPIRE AGAINST YOU.
THEN DEAL WITH THEM APPROPRIATELY IN MY ABSENCE.
I CONTINUE TO EXPAND MY SPHERE OF INFLUENCE OVER THIS REALITY.
THE WORD IS SPREADING THROUGHOUT THE HEAVENS.
"LET THE UNIVERSE KNOW THAT ENRAPTURE WILL SOON BE UPON THEM.
"MAY ALL GOOD HEARTS REJOICE.
"DELIVERANCE IS A'COMING."

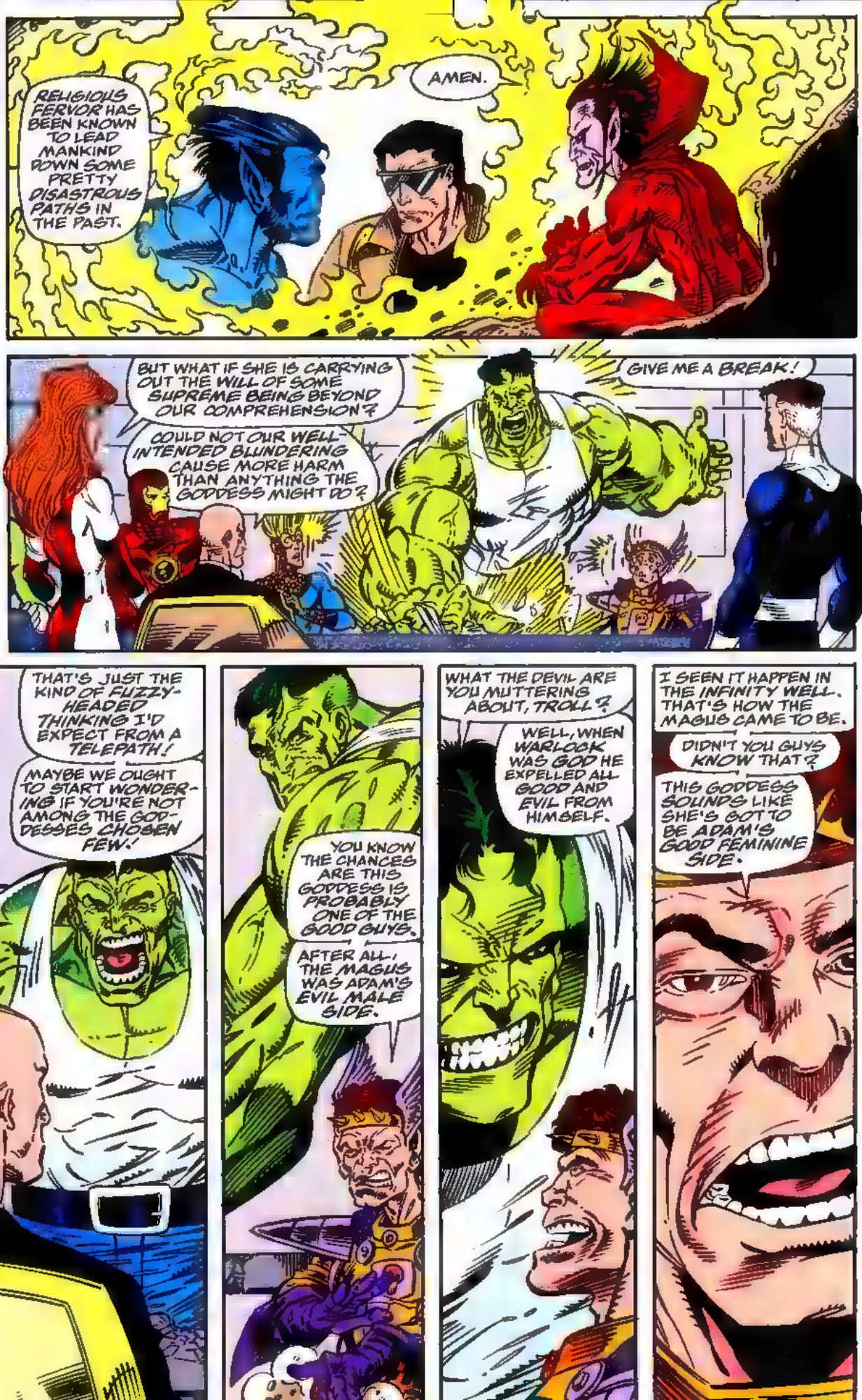
UPON THE THRONE WORLD OF THE SHI'AR EMPIRE...
THE STARJAMMERS HEPZIBAH AND RAZA.
COMMUNICATIONS HAS LOST ALL CONTACT WITH THE FOURTH BATTALION.
BAD NEWS. WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE...
...HAPPENED?

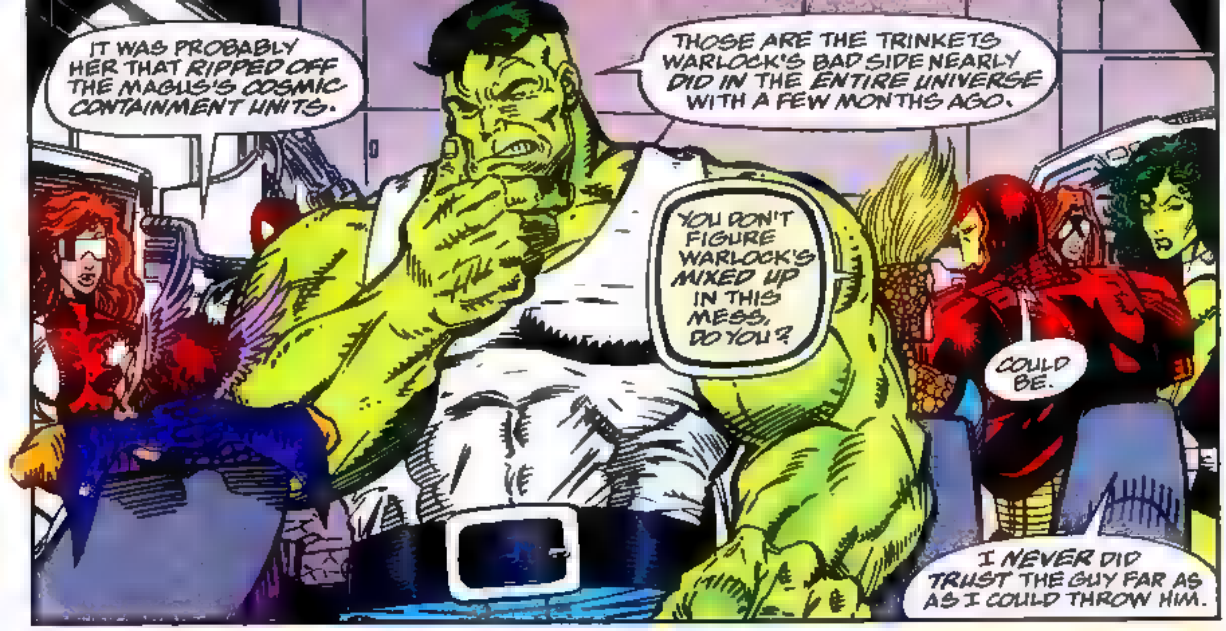

STARK HAS A NEW MODEL OF QUINJET READY FOR AVENGERS' USE.
THERE ARE TWO PROTOTYPES, AND THEY'RE EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE GOING TO NEED.
HAVE THEM PREPARED TO TAKE OFF AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.
IT SOUNDS AS IF IT HAS ALREADY BEEN DECIDED HOW WE INTEND TO DEAL WITH THIS SO-CALLED GODDESS.
BUT I FOR ONE AM NOT 100% CERTAIN SHE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A MENACE.
NOR I. HER ACTIONS, THOUGH UNORTHODOX, THUS FAR APPEAR BENIGN.
ARE YOU PEOPLE OUT OF YOUR MINDS?
SHE'S MANIPULATING PEOPLE'S MINDS!
AND TERMINATING BLOODY CONFLICTS IN THE PROCESS!
THERE MAY BE NO END TO THE GOOD SHE MIGHT ACCOMPLISH!
SIR, SECURITY HAS PICKED UP A POSSIBLE INCOMING HOSTILE ON RADAR.
SECURITY, GIVE ME A VISUAL.
THAT'S THE ABSORBING MAN--!
HE'S A POWERHOUSE BUT HE'S SURE PICKED A BAD TIME TO TAKE ON THE AVENGERS!
YES-- AND HE'S IN FOR ONE RATHER LARGE SHOCK!

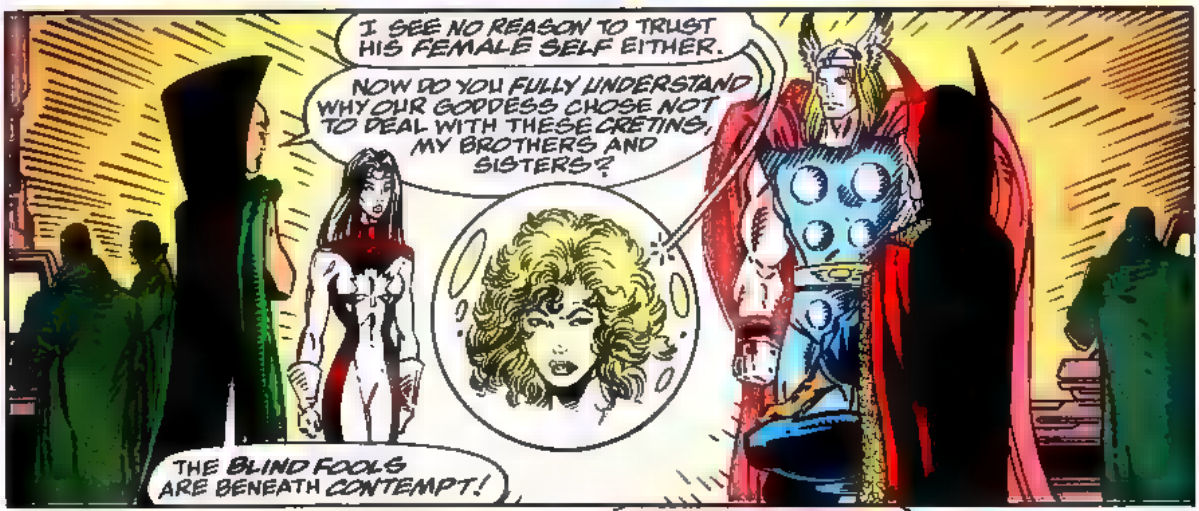
"/T'LL BE A MASSACRE."
HEY, MUSCLES, WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A CRACK AT FIRST?

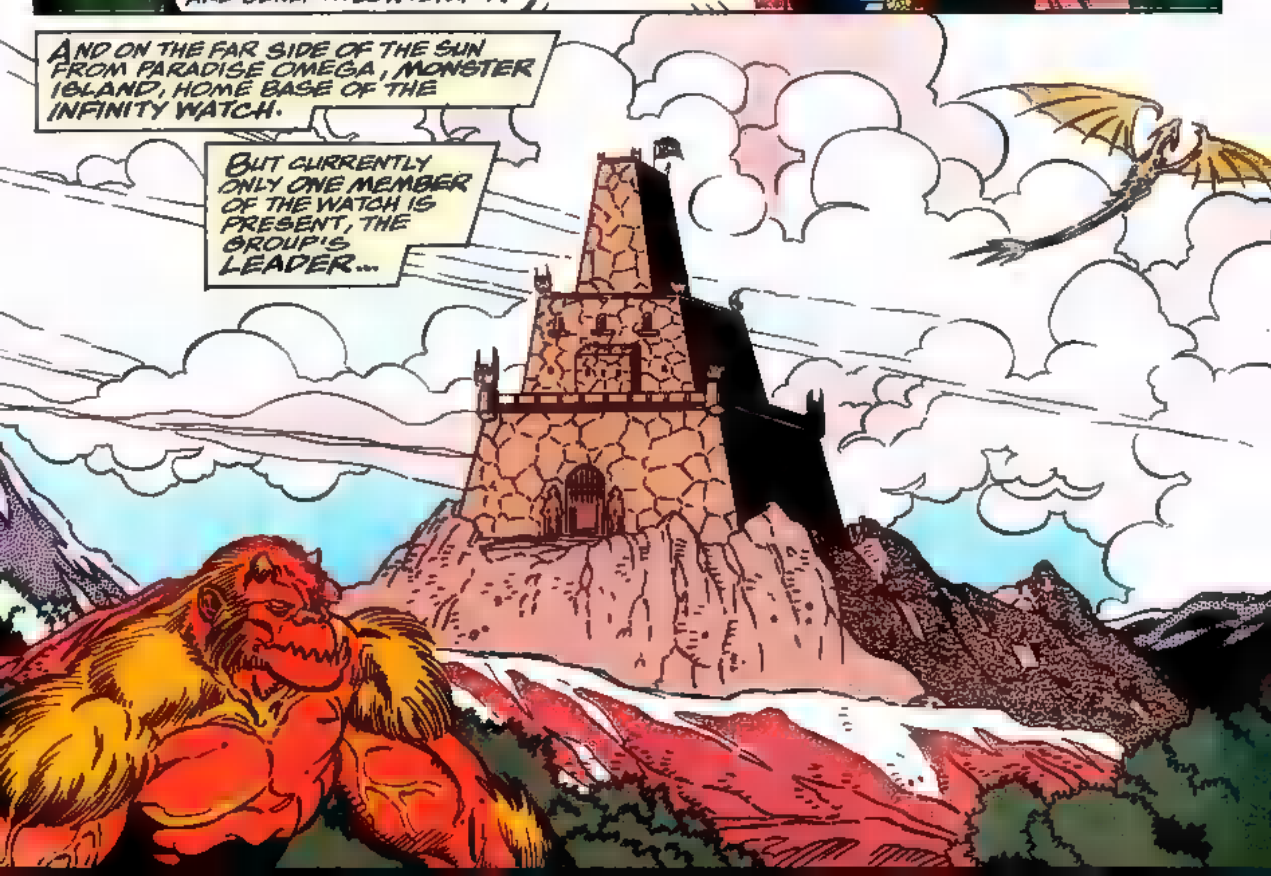
I'M AFRAID YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO FIGHT.
I CAME TO SURRENDER.
I'VE SEEN THE ERROR OF MY WAYS AND I'M READY TO FACE WHATEVER PUNISHMENT IS DUE ME.
CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS GUY?
HE'S OBVIOUSLY BEEN AFFECTED BY THE GODDESS'S TELEPATHIC EMISSIONS.
WHAT NEXT?!
WHEN ARE WE GOING TO GET SOME SOUND WITH THIS PICTURE?
RIGHT... ABOUT... NOW.
...GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS GODDESS RIGHT AWAY.
SISTER MOONDRAGON! LOOK!
BROTHER SLEEPWALKER IS FADING AWAY!
WHY IS HE DESERTING US?

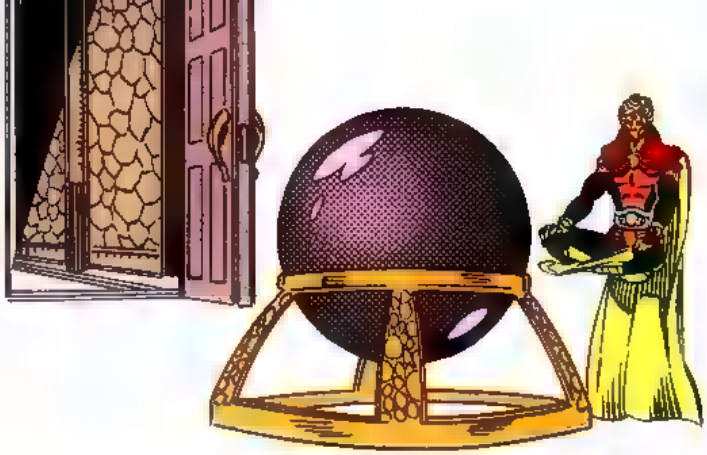
WHAT MOONDRAGON DOESN'T EVEN GUESS AT IS SOMETHING ANY REGULAR READER OF SLEEPWALKER KNOWS.
WHEN RICK SHERIDAN AWAKENS...
...THE BIZARRE MYSTIC ALIEN IS TRAPPED WITHIN HIS EARTHLY HOST BODY UNTIL RICK RETURNS TO SLUMBERLAND.*
MORNIN', RAMBO.
* THESE EVENTS HAPPENED BEFORE SLEEPWALKER #25. --CRAIG
WHAT WE HAVE TO DECIDE AMONG OURSELVES IS HOW AND IF WE ARE GOING TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THIS GODDESS.
I'M RELUCTANT TO AUTOMATICALLY BRAND HER A PERIL JUST BECAUSE SHE'S USING TECHNIQUES WE DON'T AGREE WITH. THE RESULTS THE GODDESS IS ACHIEVING FAR EXCEED ANY SUCCESS WE EVER ENJOYED USING OUR CURRENT METHODS OF OPERATION.
INTERFERING WITH HER PLAN MIGHT PROVE A GRAVE ERROR.
BUT EVEN IF SHE IS A FORCE FOR GOOD, HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT GOOD IS TRULY IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE UNIVERSE?


RELIGIOUS FERVOR HAS BEEN KNOWN TO LEAD MANKIND DOWN SOME PRETTY DISASTROUS PATHS IN THE PAST.
AMEN.
BUT WHAT IF SHE IS CARRYING OUT THE WILL OF SOME SUPREME BEING BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION?
COULD NOT OUR WELL-INTENDED BLUNDERING CAUSE MORE HARM THAN ANYTHING THE GODDESS MIGHT DO?
GIVE ME A BREAK!
THAT'S JUST THE KIND OF FUZZY-HEADED THINKING I'D EXPECT FROM A TELEPATH!
MAYBE WE OUGHT TO START WONDERING IF YOU'RE NOT AMONG THE GODDESSES CHOSEN FEW!
YOU KNOW THE CHANCES ARE THIS GODDESS IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.
AFTER ALL, THE MAGUS WAS ADAM'S EVIL MALE SIDE.
WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU MUTTERING ABOUT, TROLL?
WELL, WHEN WARLOCK WAS GOD HE EXPELLED ALL GOOD AND EVIL FROM HIMSELF.
I SEEN IT HAPPEN IN THE INFINITY WELL. THAT'S HOW THE MAGUS CAME TO BE.
DIDN'T YOU GUYS KNOW THAT?
THIS GODDESS SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S GOT TO BE ADAM'S GOOD FEMININE SIDE.


IT WAS PROBABLY HER THAT RIPPED OFF THE MAGUS'S COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNITS.
THOSE ARE THE TRINKETS WARLOCK'S BAD SIDE NEARLY DID IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE WITH A FEW MONTHS AGO.
YOU DON'T FIGURE WARLOCK'S MIXED UP IN THIS MESS, DO YOU?
COULD BE.
I NEVER DID TRUST THE GUY FAR AS AS I COULD THROW HIM.

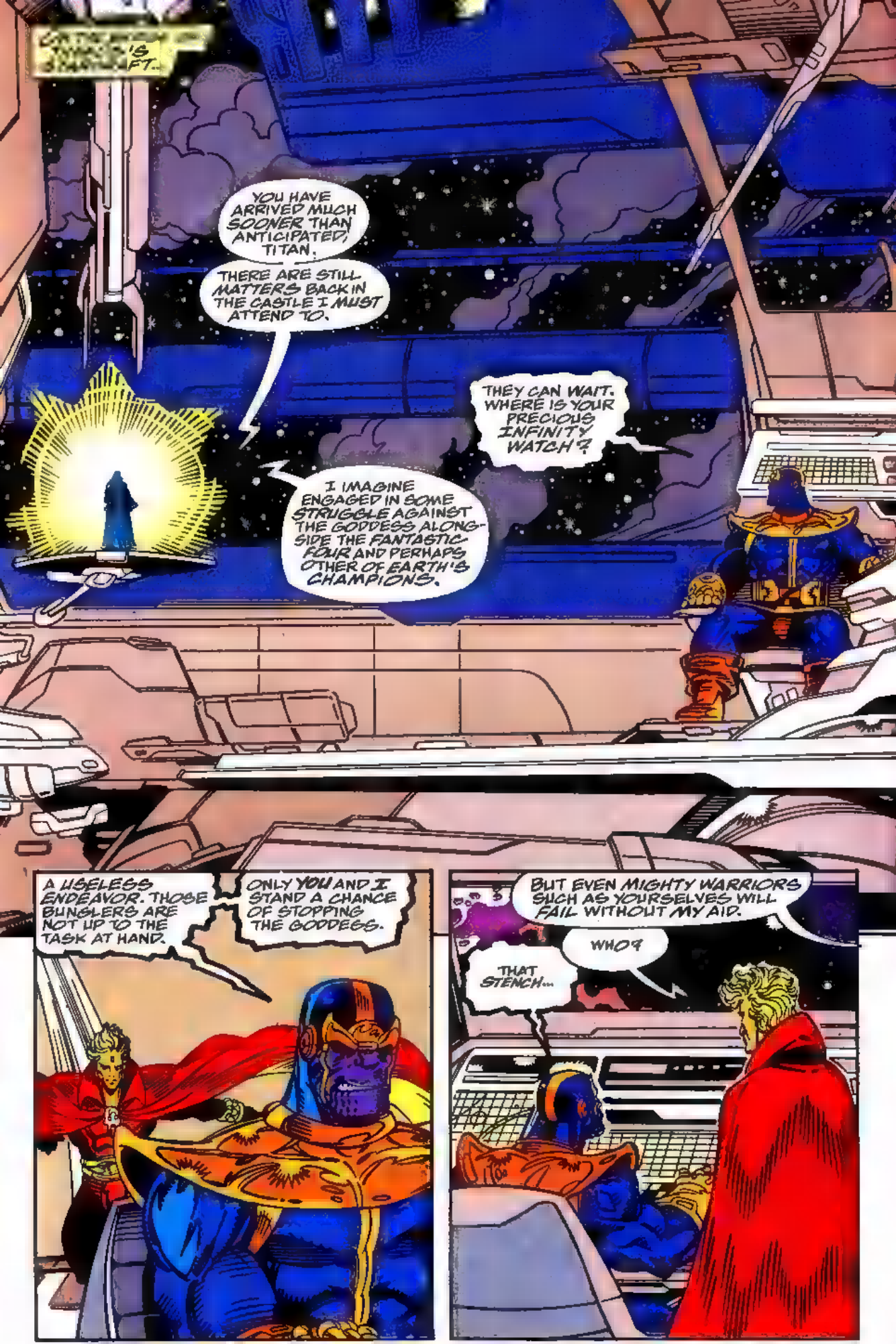

I SEE NO REASON TO TRUST HIS FEMALE SELF EITHER.
NOW DO YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND WHY OUR GODDESS CHOSE NOT TO DEAL WITH THESE CRETINS, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS?
THE BLIND FOOLS ARE BENEATH CONTEMPT!

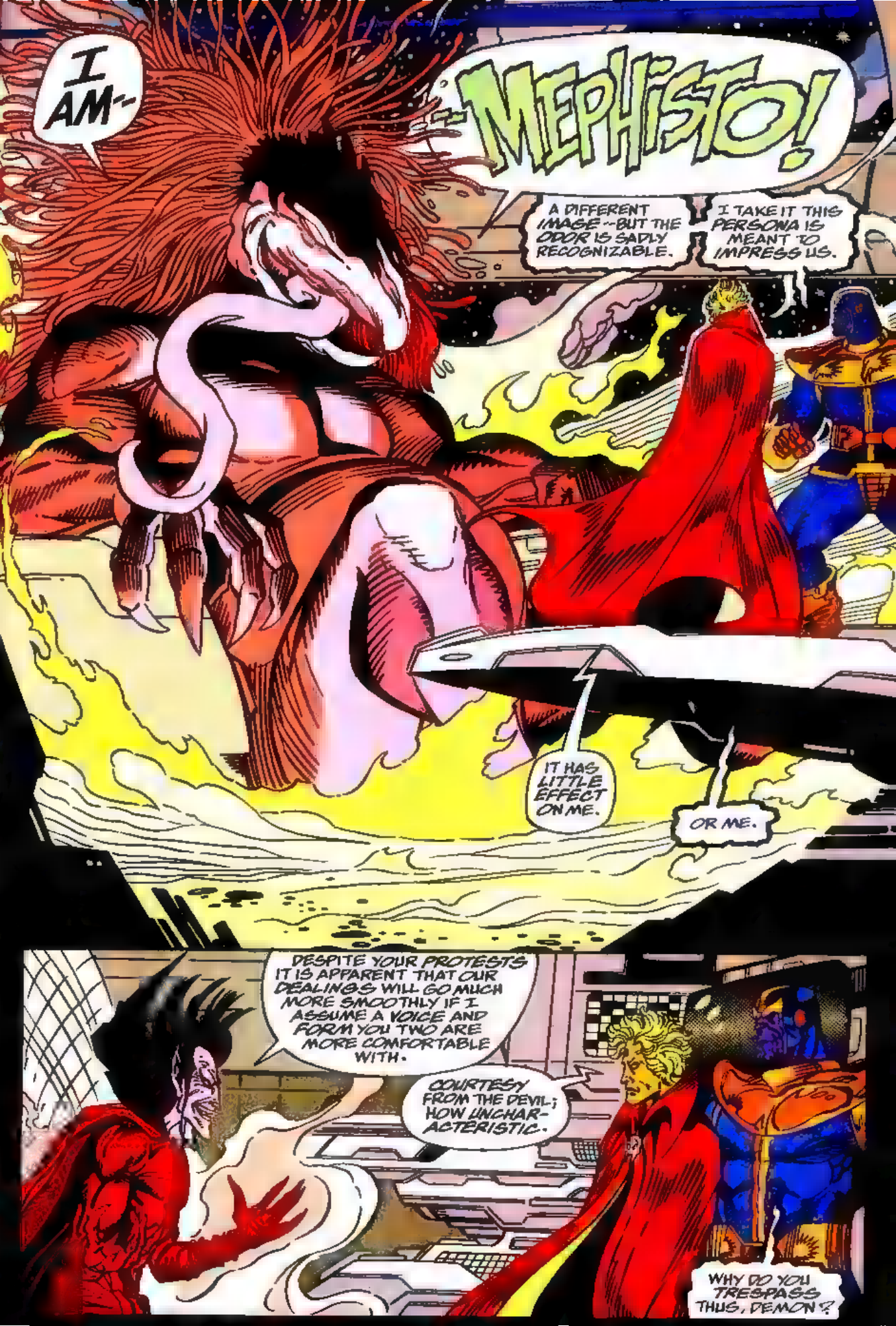

AND ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN FROM PARADISE OMEGA, MONSTER ISLAND, HOME BASE OF THE INFINITY WATCH.
BUT CURRENTLY ONLY ONE MEMBER OF THE WATCH IS PRESENT, THE GROUP'S LEADER...



ADAM WARLOCK.

HE SEEKS ANSWERS WITHIN THE VOID THAT WAS ONCE HIS PRIVATE CHAMBERS.

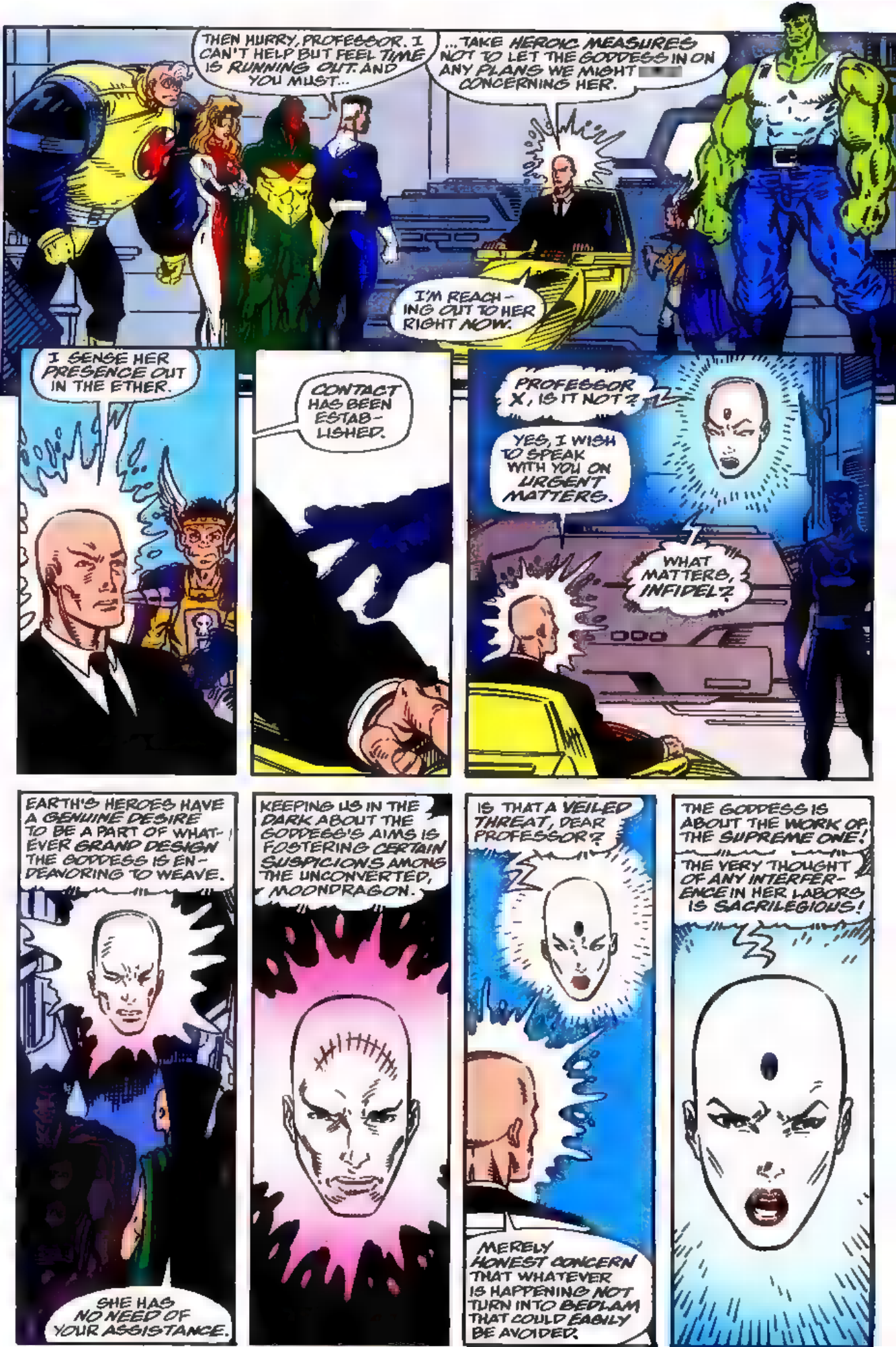

ON THE BODY OF THANOS'S STARSHIP...
YOU HAVE ARRIVED MUCH SOONER THAN ANTICIPATED, TITAN.
THERE ARE STILL MATTERS BACK IN THE CASTLE I MUST ATTEND TO.
I IMAGINE ENGAGED IN SOME STRUGGLE AGAINST THE GODDESS ALONGSIDE THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND PERHAPS OTHER OF EARTH'S CHAMPIONS.
THEY CAN WAIT. WHERE IS YOUR PRECIOUS INFINITY WATCH?
A USELESS ENDEAVOR. THOSE BUNGLERS ARE NOT UP TO THE TASK AT HAND.
ONLY YOU AND I STAND A CHANCE OF STOPPING THE GODDESS.
BUT EVEN MIGHTY WARRIORS SUCH AS YOURSELVES WILL FAIL WITHOUT MY AID.
WHO?
THAT STENCH...

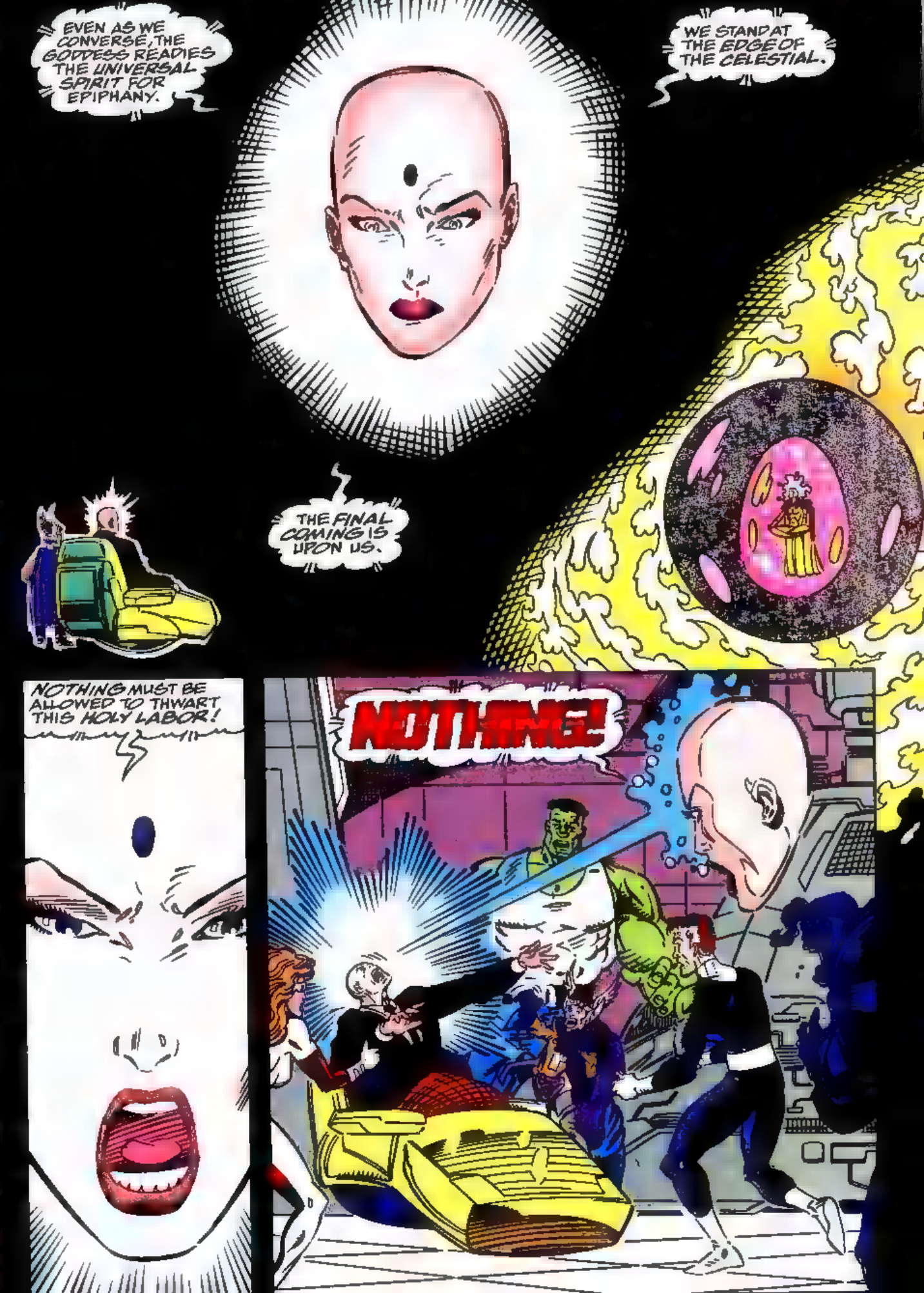

I AM--
--MEPHISTO!
A DIFFERENT IMAGE--BUT THE ODOR IS SADLY RECOGNIZABLE.
I TAKE IT THIS PERSONA IS MEANT TO IMPRESS US.
IT HAS LITTLE EFFECT ON ME.
OR ME.
DESPITE YOUR PROTESTS IT IS APPARENT THAT OUR DEALINGS WILL GO MUCH MORE SMOOTHLY IF I ASSUME A VOICE AND FORM YOU TWO ARE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH.
COURTESY FROM THE DEVIL; HOW UNCHARACTERISTIC.
WHY DO YOU TRESPASS THUS, DEMON?

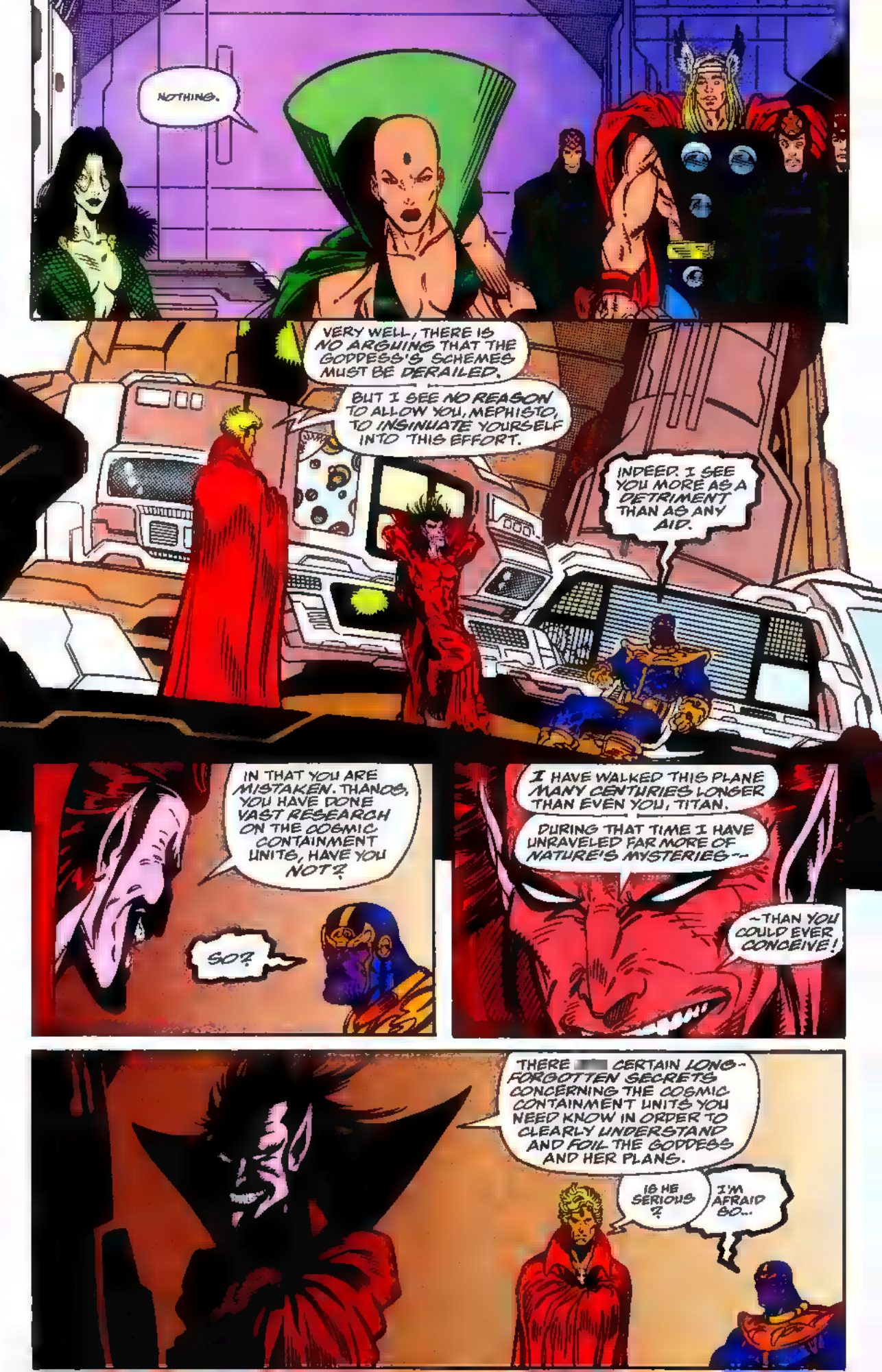
TO AID YOU IN YOUR CONFLICT AGAINST THE BOASTFUL ENTITY CALLING HERSELF THE GODDESS.
WHY WOULD YOU WISH TO DO THAT?
IN THIS WOMAN I SENSE A BEING FAR TOO SAINTLY FOR THE UNIVERSE'S GOOD.
IF DARK MEPHISTO STANDS READY TO DEFY THE WILL OF THE GODDESS, PERHAPS I MUST RETHINK MY POSITION ON HER.
I SHOULD NOT HAVE EXPECTED A MORE REASONABLE RESPONSE TO MY OFFER, BUT HOPE BLOOMS ETERNAL.
SPARE US YOUR PATHETIC WITTICISMS, DEMON.
YOU KNOW THAT, FOR ONCE, THE THREE OF US SHARE A COMMON GOAL.
WHETHER SHE BE FAIR OR FOUL, THE GODDESS IS BUT AN UNBRIDLED FACET OF WARLOCK, A CREATURE OF EXTREMES HIMSELF.
SUCH AN ENTITY, POSSESSING THE POWER SHE DOES, CANNOT RUN UNCHECKED.
ONLY UNIVERSAL DISASTER CAN SPRING FROM THE WOMB OF HER LIMITED PHILOSOPHY.
LIKE IT OR NOT ADAM, SHE MUST BE STOPPED.

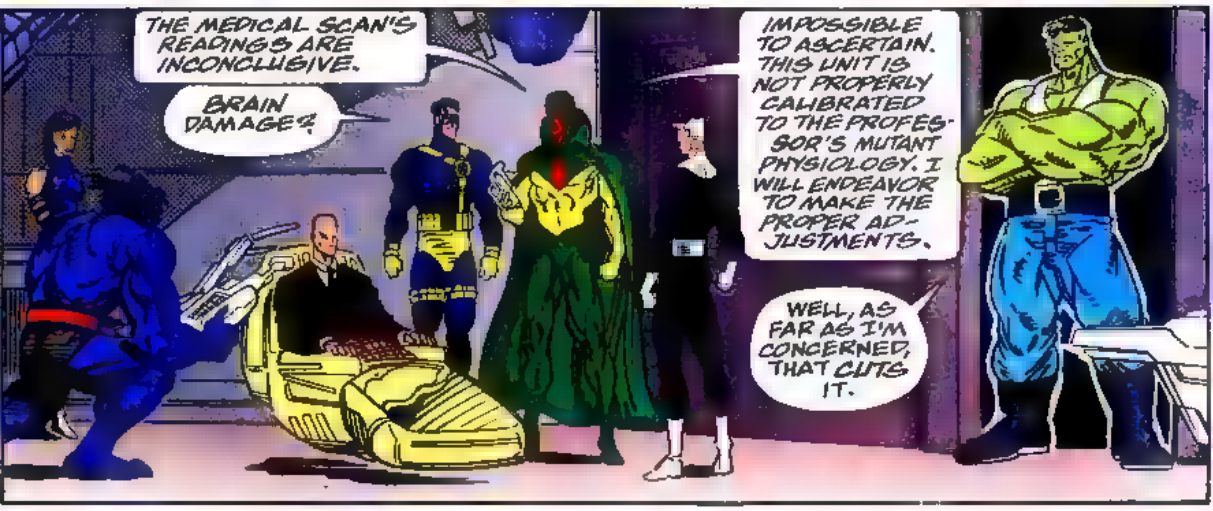
THE GODDESS'S STATED AIM IS TO ERADICATE ALL EVIL FROM THE UNIVERSE.
BUT EVIL IS BUT THE FLIP SIDE OF THE COIN OF GOOD.
ONLY A MADWOMAN WOULD BELIEVE THAT EVIL COULD BE BANISHED WITHOUT EXILING GOOD ALONG WITH IT.
WITH THOSE TWO QUALITIES ABSENT, SENTIENT SPIRIT WOULD BE SADLY LACKING IN MOST ENTITIES.
I MANAGE.
YOU ARE A MOST NOTABLE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE.
BUT SEEING AS HOW THE GODDESS IS BUT A PART OF YOUR WHOLE...
...THERE IS A MATTER YOU SHOULD PUT YOUR MIND TO.
IF IN POSSESSION OF ALMOST LIMITLESS POWER, HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT ELIMINATING ALL EVIL?
ELIMINATING ALL EVIL...?
WHETHER SHE BE SAINT OR SINNER, THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT BY NOT OPPOSING THE GODDESS'S PLANS WE WOULD IN EFFECT BE SURRENDERING THE UNIVERSE'S FREE WILL.
ARE WE WILLING TO MAKE SUCH A SACRIFICE EVEN TO GAIN PEACE THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY?

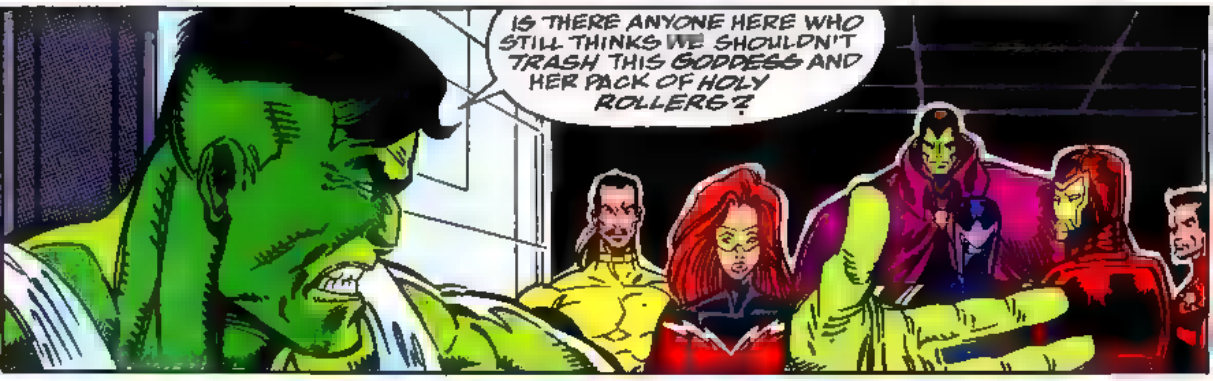
THIS DEBATE HAS CONTINUED LONG ENOUGH.
THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO DECIDE ON A COURSE OF ACTION; A VOTE MUST BE TAKEN.
THE MAJORITY IS GOING TO HAVE TO RULE IN THIS MATTER.
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID UTTER CHAOS.
I AGREE, BUT I ASK THAT THE VOTE BE POSTPONED LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO APPROACH MOONDRAGON TELEPATHICALLY.
PERHAPS REASON MAY YET PREVAIL OVER CONFLICT.
TRUTHFULLY, I DOUBT IT, BUT I'M MORE THAN WILLING TO GIVE IT A TRY, PROFESSOR.
WILL YOU BE ABLE TO MAKE CONTACT FROM HERE?
SEEING THAT MOONDRAGON POSSESSES THE INFINITY MIND GEM, I ASSUME THAT SHE SHOULD BE EXTRAORDINARILY SENSITIVE TO ANY TELEPATHIC MESSAGE SENT HER WAY.

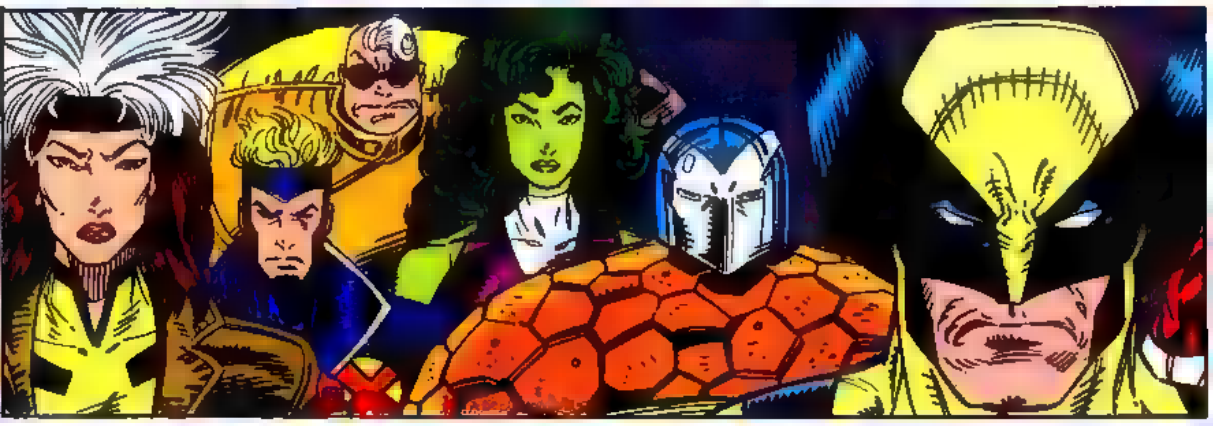

THEN HURRY, PROFESSOR. I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL TIME IS RUNNING OUT. AND YOU MUST...
...TAKE HEROIC MEASURES NOT TO LET THE GODDESS IN ON ANY PLANS WE MIGHT [redacted] CONCERNING HER.
I'M REACH-ING OUT TO HER RIGHT NOW.
I SENSE HER PRESENCE OUT IN THE ETHER.
CONTACT HAS BEEN ESTAB-LISHED.
PROFESSOR X, IS IT NOT?
YES, I WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOU ON URGENT MATTERS.
WHAT MATTERS, INFIDEL?
EARTH'S HEROES HAVE A GENUINE DESIRE TO BE A PART OF WHAT-EVER GRAND DESIGN THE GODDESS IS EN-DEAVORING TO WEAVE.
SHE HAS NO NEED OF YOUR ASSISTANCE.
KEEPING US IN THE DARK ABOUT THE GODDESS'S AIMS IS FOSTERING CERTAIN SUSPICIONS AMONG THE UNCONVERTED, MOONDRAGON.
IS THAT A VEILED THREAT, DEAR PROFESSOR?
MERELY HONEST CONCERN THAT WHATEVER IS HAPPENING NOT TURN INTO BEDLAM THAT COULD EASILY BE AVOIDED.
THE GODDESS IS ABOUT THE WORK OF THE SUPREME ONE!
THE VERY THOUGHT OF ANY INTERFER-ENCE IN HER LABORS IS SACRILEGIOUS!


EVEN AS WE CONVERSE, THE GODDESS READIES THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT FOR EPIPHANY.
WE STAND AT THE EDGE OF THE CELESTIAL.
THE FINAL COMING IS UPON US.
NOTHING MUST BE ALLOWED TO THWART THIS HOLY LABOR!
NOTHING!


NOTHING.
VERY WELL, THERE IS NO ARGUING THAT THE GODDESS'S SCHEMES MUST BE DERAILED.
BUT I SEE NO REASON TO ALLOW YOU, MEPHISTO, TO INSINUATE YOURSELF INTO THIS EFFORT.
INDEED. I SEE YOU MORE AS A DETRIMENT THAN AS ANY AID.
IN THAT YOU ARE MISTAKEN. THANOS, YOU HAVE DONE VAST RESEARCH ON THE COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNITS, HAVE YOU NOT?
SO?
I HAVE WALKED THIS PLANE MANY CENTURIES LONGER THAN EVEN YOU, TITAN.
DURING THAT TIME I HAVE UNRAVELED FAR MORE OF NATURE'S MYSTERIES--
--THAN YOU COULD EVER CONCEIVE!
THERE [redacted] CERTAIN LONG-FORGOTTEN SECRETS CONCERNING THE COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNITS YOU NEED KNOW IN ORDER TO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND AND FOIL THE GODDESS AND HER PLANS.
IS HE SERIOUS?
I'M AFRAID SO...


THE MEDICAL SCAN'S READINGS ARE INCONCLUSIVE.
BRAIN DAMAGE?
IMPOSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN. THIS UNIT IS NOT PROPERLY CALIBRATED TO THE PROFESSOR'S MUTANT PHYSIOLOGY. I WILL ENDEAVOR TO MAKE THE PROPER ADJUSTMENTS.
WELL, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THAT CUTS IT.

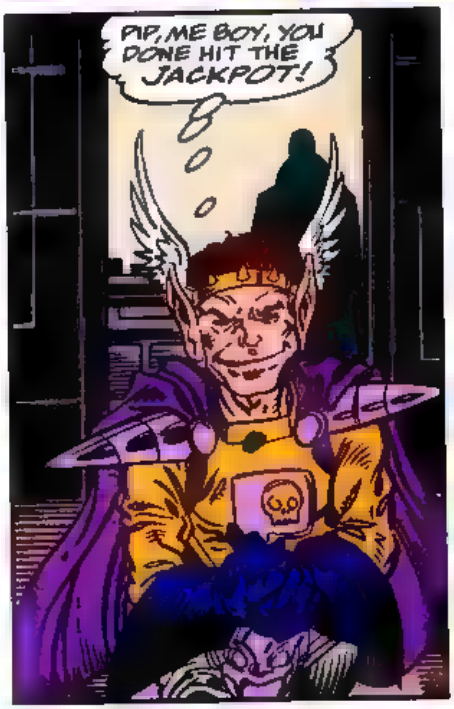

IS THERE ANYONE HERE WHO STILL THINKS WE SHOULDN'T TRASH THIS GODDESS AND HER PACK OF HOLY ROLLERS?



I DIDN'T THINK SO.
C'MON, RICHARDS, LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD!
4

MR. VISION, CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THOSE COMIC CONTAINMENT UNITS?
COSMIC.
WHATEVER.
WHAT DO YOU WISH TO KNOW?
EXACTLY WHAT THEY DO AND HOW THEY WORK.

THE UNITS GRANT THEIR HOLDER ALMOST ANY WISH THAT HE MENTALLY REQUESTS.
THERE ANY SWITCHES YOU GOTTA OPERATE?
NO, ONE NEED MERELY BE IN PHYSICAL CONTACT AND THINK OF HIS REQUEST.
IMAGINE THAT. THANKS.


PIP, ME BOY, YOU DONE HIT THE JACKPOT!

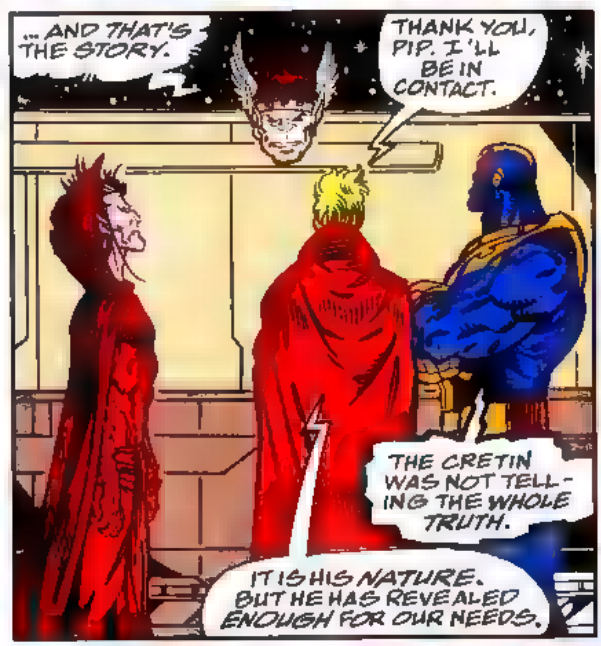
BY TOUCHIN' THE PROFESSOR WHEN HE WAS JAWIN' WITH THE OTHER BALDY, MY TELE-PORTATIONAL POWERS GOT A TELEPATHIC FIX ON MOONDRAGON'S LOCATION... WHICH MEANS I CAN ZAP THERE ANY TIME I FEEL LIKE IT.

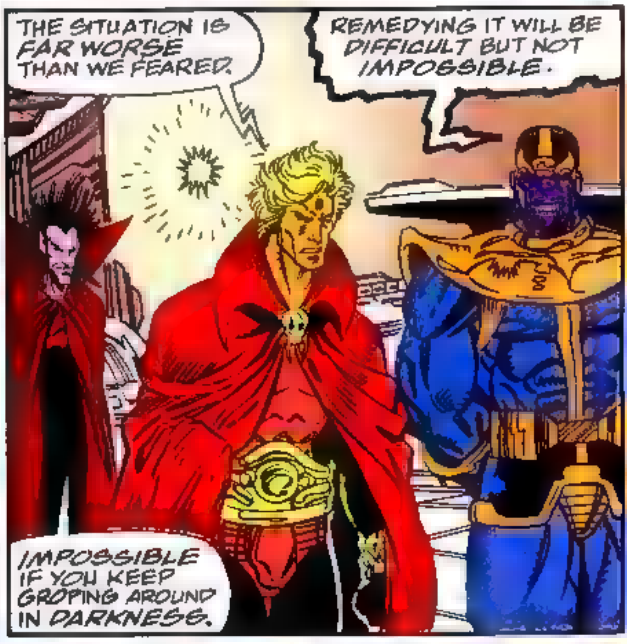
GOT THAT SAME FIX ON THE GODDESS WHEN MOONY WAS THINKIN' ABOUT HER!
NOTHIN' TO STOP ME FROM GIVIN' HER A SURPRISE VISIT.

LOOKS LIKE THE TIME HAS COME FOR PIP THE TROLL TO PLAY THE HERO.
THAT'LL SHOW THESE DUDES WHO'S REALLY HOT STUFF AROUND HERE!

PIP!
HUH?

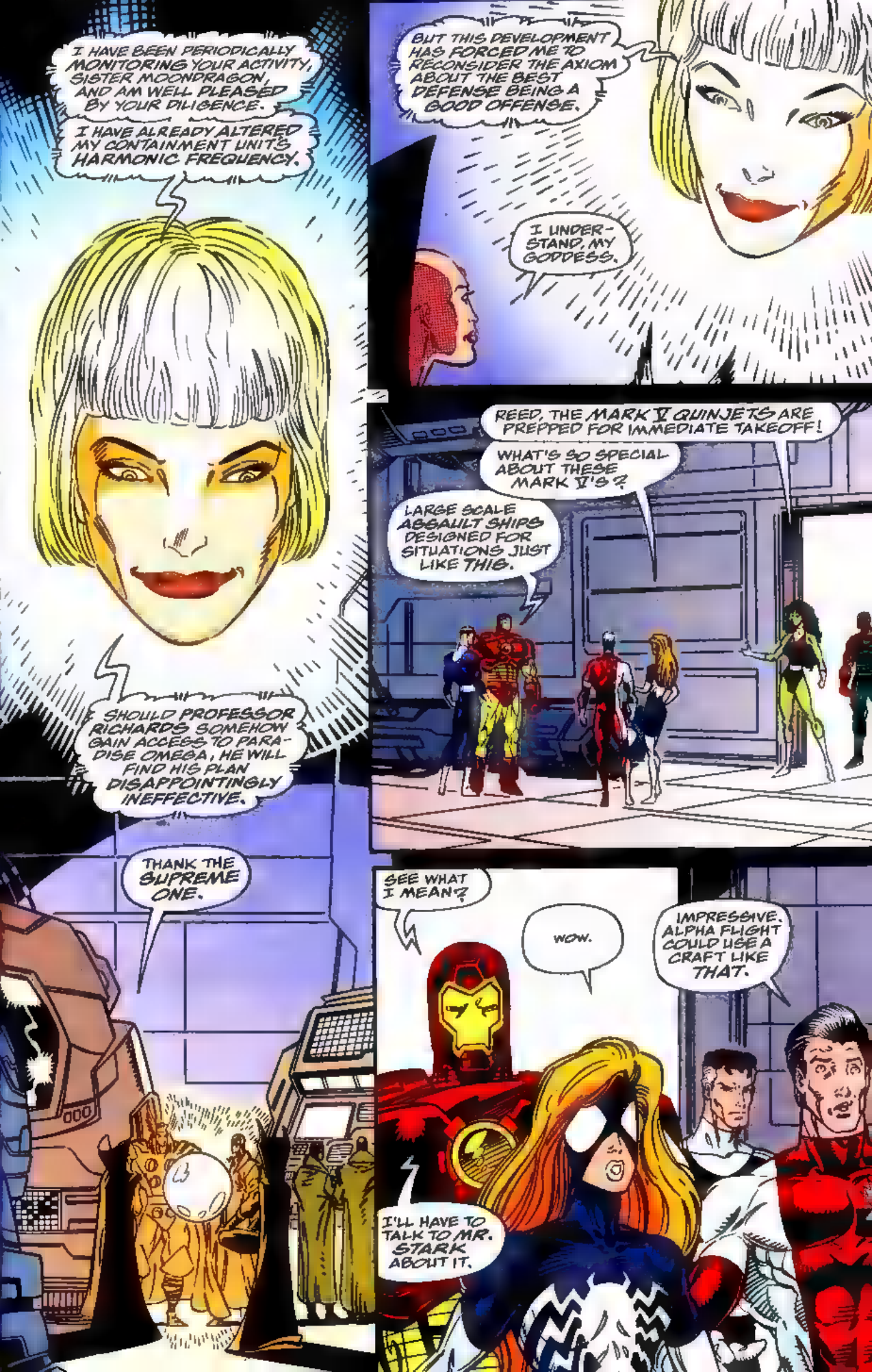
ADAM?!
USING MY SOUL GEM TO CONTACT YOU ON A SPIRITUAL LEVEL!
PLEASE PRECISELY INFORM ME AS TO WHAT IS GOING ON AT YOUR END.
AND DO YOU KNOW WHY MY SUMMONS TO GAMORA AND MOON-DRAGON WOULD HAVE BEEN REFUSED?
SURE DO.

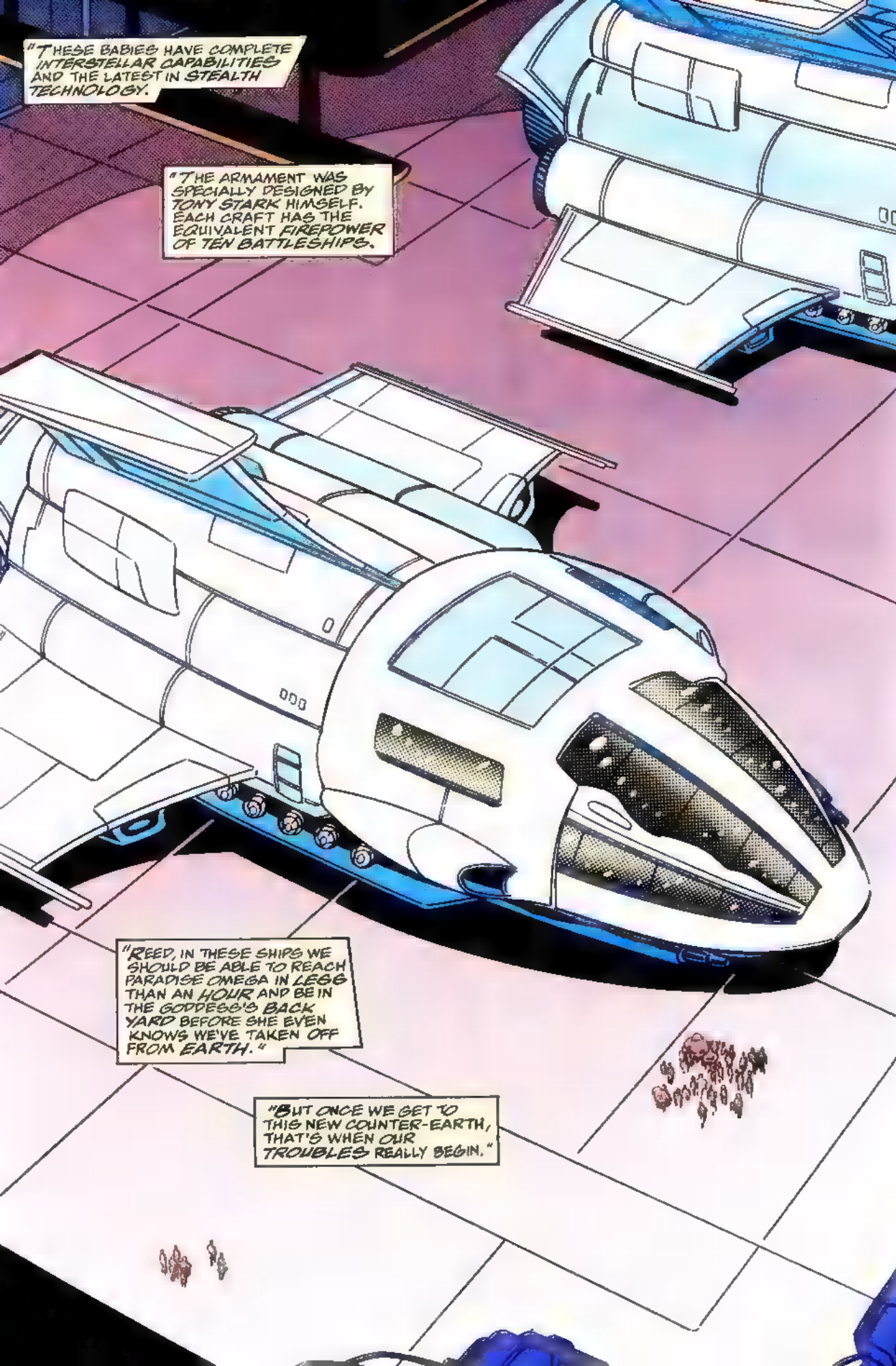

...AND THAT'S THE STORY.
THANK YOU, PIP. I'LL BE IN CONTACT.
THE CRETIN WAS NOT TELLING THE WHOLE TRUTH.
IT IS HIS NATURE. BUT HE HAS REVEALED ENOUGH FOR OUR NEEDS.


THE SITUATION IS FAR WORSE THAN WE FEARED.
REMEDYING IT WILL BE DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE.
IMPOSSIBLE IF YOU KEEP GROPING AROUND IN DARKNESS.

I TAKE IT YOU ARE OFFERING ILLUMINATION?
FOR A PRICE.
WHICH IS?
WHEN AND IF YOU SUCCEED IN DEFEATING THIS GODDESS, I ASSUME HER COLLECTION OF COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNITS WILL BE BROKEN UP.
MOST DEFINITELY.

THEN THE PRICE FOR MY EXPERTISE AND SERVICES IS MERELY ONE COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNIT.
THE WAY I SEE IT, OUR ONE HOPE IS GETTING CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE GODDESS TO USE THIS.
WHAT IS IT?
A HARMONIC DISRUPTER SET TO DISABLE OUR ENEMY'S GROUP COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNIT.
BUT WILL IT WORK?
I BELIEVE SO.
I PICKED UP ON THE GIANT EGG'S FREQUENCY WHEN I WAS VISITING PARADISE OMEGA.
AN INGENIOUS PLAN..
ONE THAT MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED IF...
GODDESS, I HAVE JUST COME INTO POSSESSION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION YOU WILL FIND EXTREMELY INTERESTING.


I HAVE BEEN PERIODICALLY MONITORING YOUR ACTIVITY, SISTER MOONDRAGON, AND AM WELL PLEASED BY YOUR DILIGENCE.
I HAVE ALREADY ALTERED MY CONTAINMENT UNIT'S HARMONIC FREQUENCY.
SHOULD PROFESSOR RICHARDS SOMEHOW GAIN ACCESS TO PARADISE OMEGA, HE WILL FIND HIS PLAN DISAPPOINTINGLY INEFFECTIVE.
THANK THE SUPREME ONE.
BUT THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS FORCED ME TO RECONSIDER THE AXIOM ABOUT THE BEST DEFENSE BEING A GOOD OFFENSE.
I UNDERSTAND, MY GODDESS.
REED, THE MARK V QUINJETS ARE PREPPED FOR IMMEDIATE TAKEOFF!
WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THESE MARK V'S?
LARGE SCALE ASSAULT SHIPS DESIGNED FOR SITUATIONS JUST LIKE THIS.
SEE WHAT I MEAN?
WOW.
IMPRESSIVE. ALPHA FLIGHT COULD USE A CRAFT LIKE THAT.
I'LL HAVE TO TALK TO MR. STARK ABOUT IT.


"THESE BABIES HAVE COMPLETE INTERSTELLAR CAPABILITIES AND THE LATEST IN STEALTH TECHNOLOGY.
"THE ARMAMENT WAS SPECIALLY DESIGNED BY TONY STARK HIMSELF. EACH CRAFT HAS THE EQUIVALENT FIREPOWER OF TEN BATTLESHIPS.
"REED, IN THESE SHIPS WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO REACH PARADISE OMEGA IN LESS THAN AN HOUR AND BE IN THE GODDESS'S BACK YARD BEFORE SHE EVEN KNOWS WE'VE TAKEN OFF FROM EARTH."
"BUT ONCE WE GET TO THIS NEW COUNTER-EARTH, THAT'S WHEN OUR TROUBLES REALLY BEGIN."

I HOPE ALL PRESENT REALIZE THAT EVEN THOUGH THOSE WE FACE WERE ONCE OUR ALLIES, WE CAN EXPECT NO QUARTER FROM THEM.
THEY TRULY THINK THAT THEY ARE DEFENDING THE SECOND COMING OR SOMETHING, AND WILL FIGHT TO THE DEATH.
THE GODDESS CHOSE THE BEST FROM AMONG US--THOSE WITH THE STRONGEST HEARTS, SPIRITS AND POWERS.
BECAUSE THEY WERE OUR FRIENDS, NOW TURNED ENEMIES, THEY KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT FROM US AND WILL BE READY TO DEAL WITH IT.
WE MAY BE IN FOR THE TOUGHEST FIGHT WE'VE EVER HAD.

HERCULES, THIS BOMB OUGHT TO LEVEL ■ GOOD SECTION OF MANHATTAN.

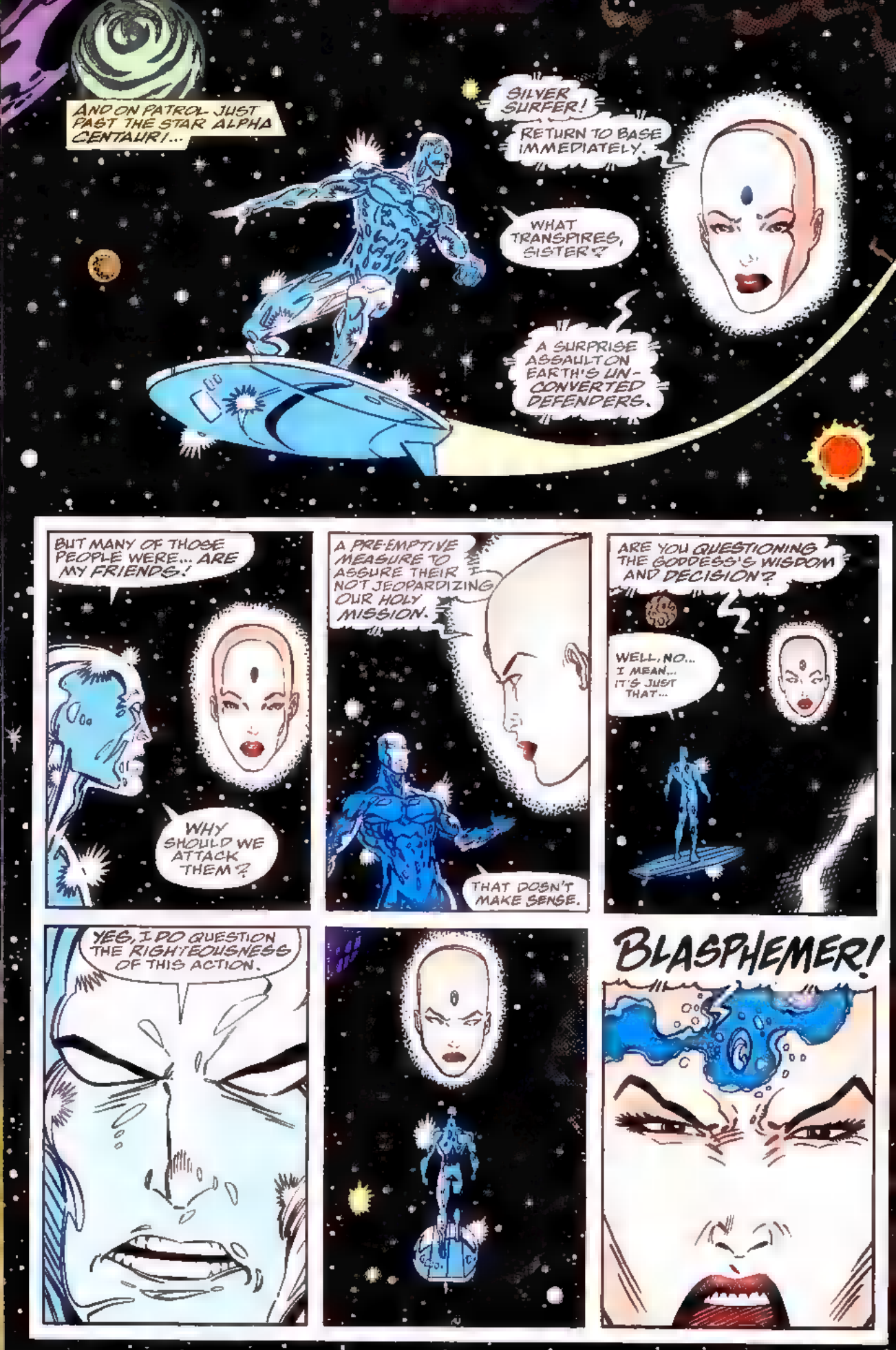
'TIS JUST, WONDER MAN. YON CITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SNAKE PIT OF CORRUPTION AND VICE... THOUGH IT HAS ITS CHARMS, E'EN FOR AN IMMORTAL.

MULTIPLE MAN, I THOUGHT YOU WERE BRINGING FIRELORD AND THE SURFER IN ON THIS CYCLE?

COULDN'T. THEY'RE OUT OF TRANSPORT RANGE, CAP.

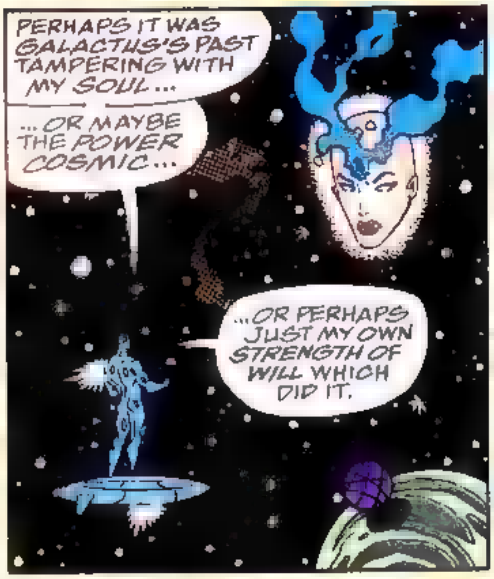
THEN I SHALL TELEPATHICALLY SUMMON THEM CLOSER TO PARADISE OMEGA.

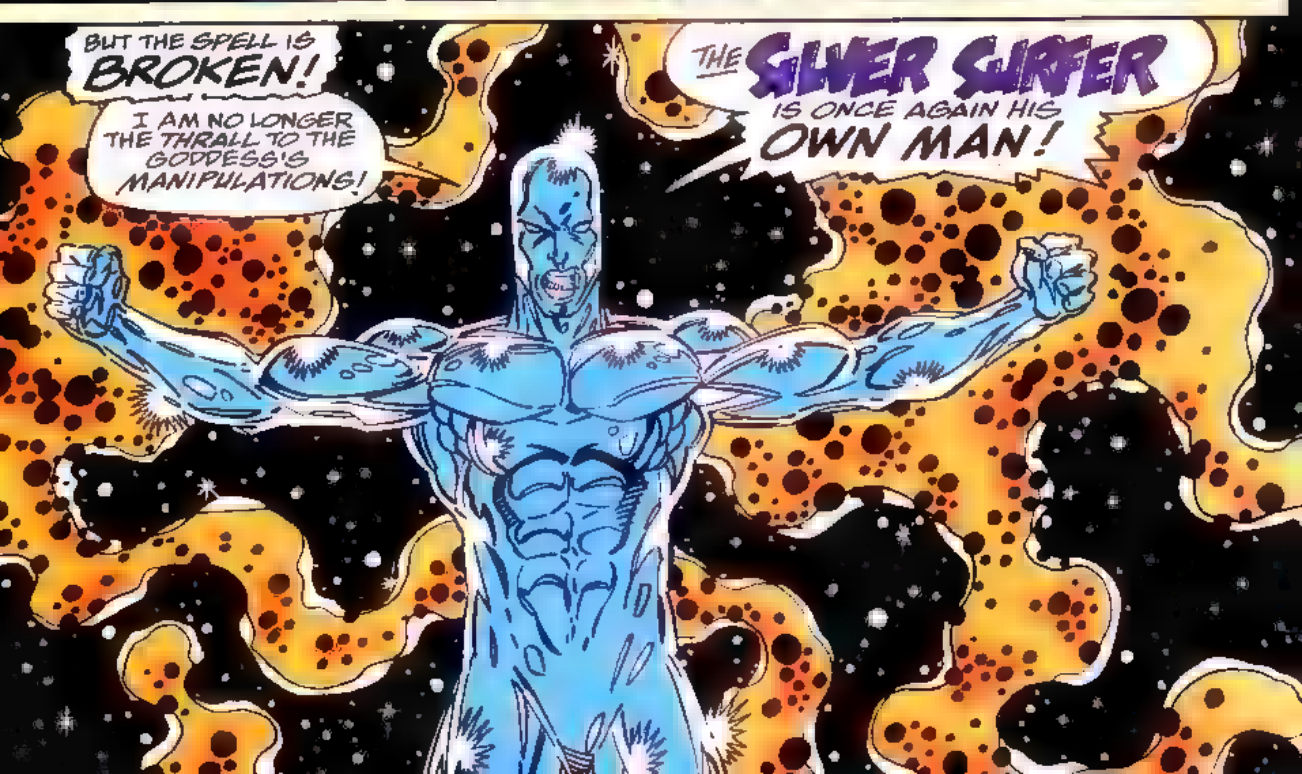
OUR TASK DURING THE RAID WILL BE TO MYSTICALLY DISRUPT AS MANY COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AS POSSIBLE.

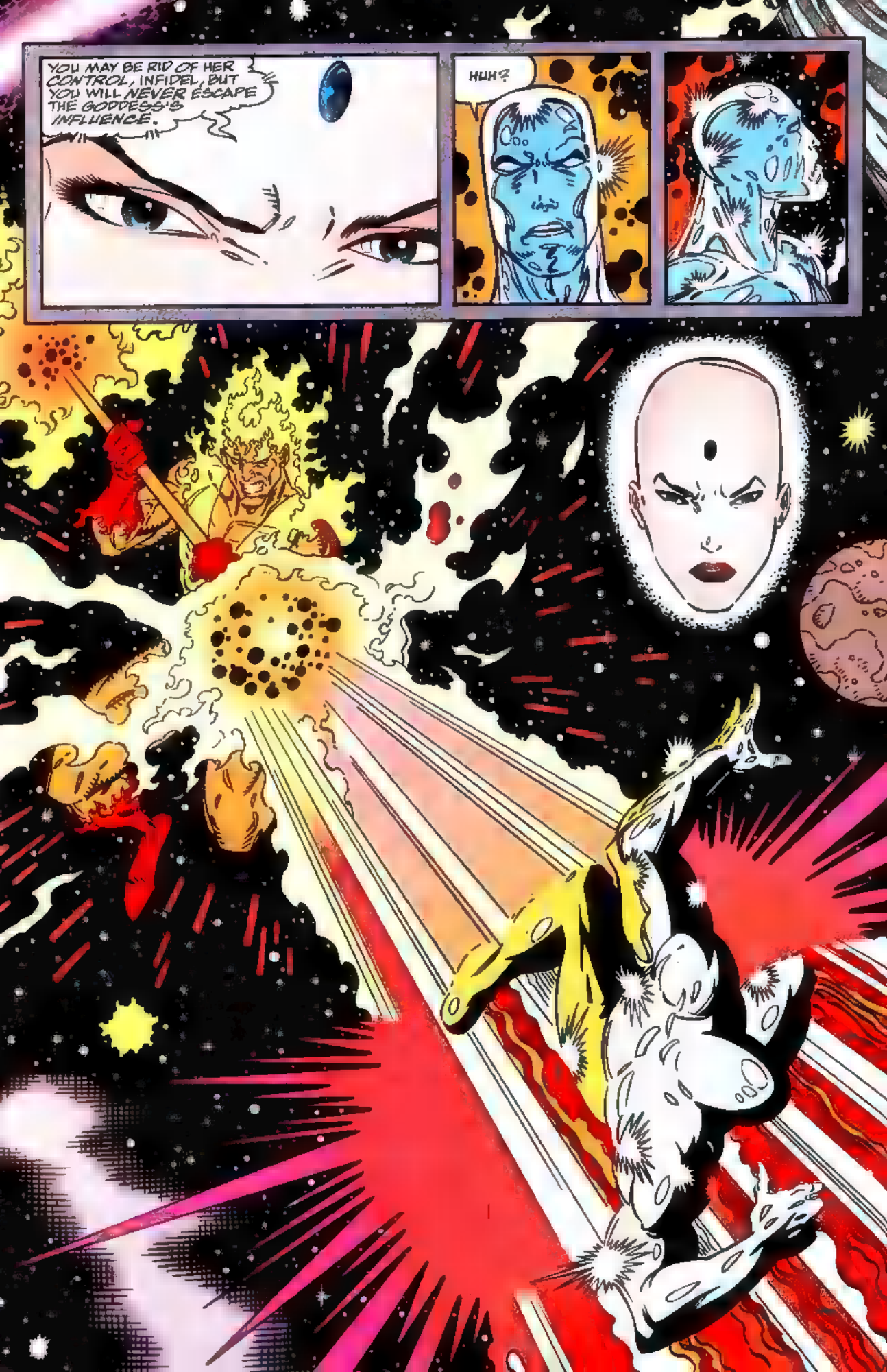

AND ON PATROL JUST PAST THE STAR ALPHA CENTAUR!...
SILVER SURFER!
RETURN TO BASE IMMEDIATELY.
WHAT TRANSPIRES, SISTER?
A SURPRISE ASSAULT ON EARTH'S UN-CONVERTED DEFENDERS.
BUT MANY OF THOSE PEOPLE WERE... ARE MY FRIENDS!
WHY SHOULD WE ATTACK THEM?
A PRE-EMPTIVE MEASURE TO ASSURE THEIR I NOT JEOPARDIZING OUR HOLY MISSION.
THAT DOSN'T MAKE SENSE.
ARE YOU QUESTIONING THE GODDESS'S WISDOM AND DECISION?
WELL, NO... I MEAN... IT'S JUST THAT...
YES, I DO QUESTION THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THIS ACTION.
BLASPHEMER!

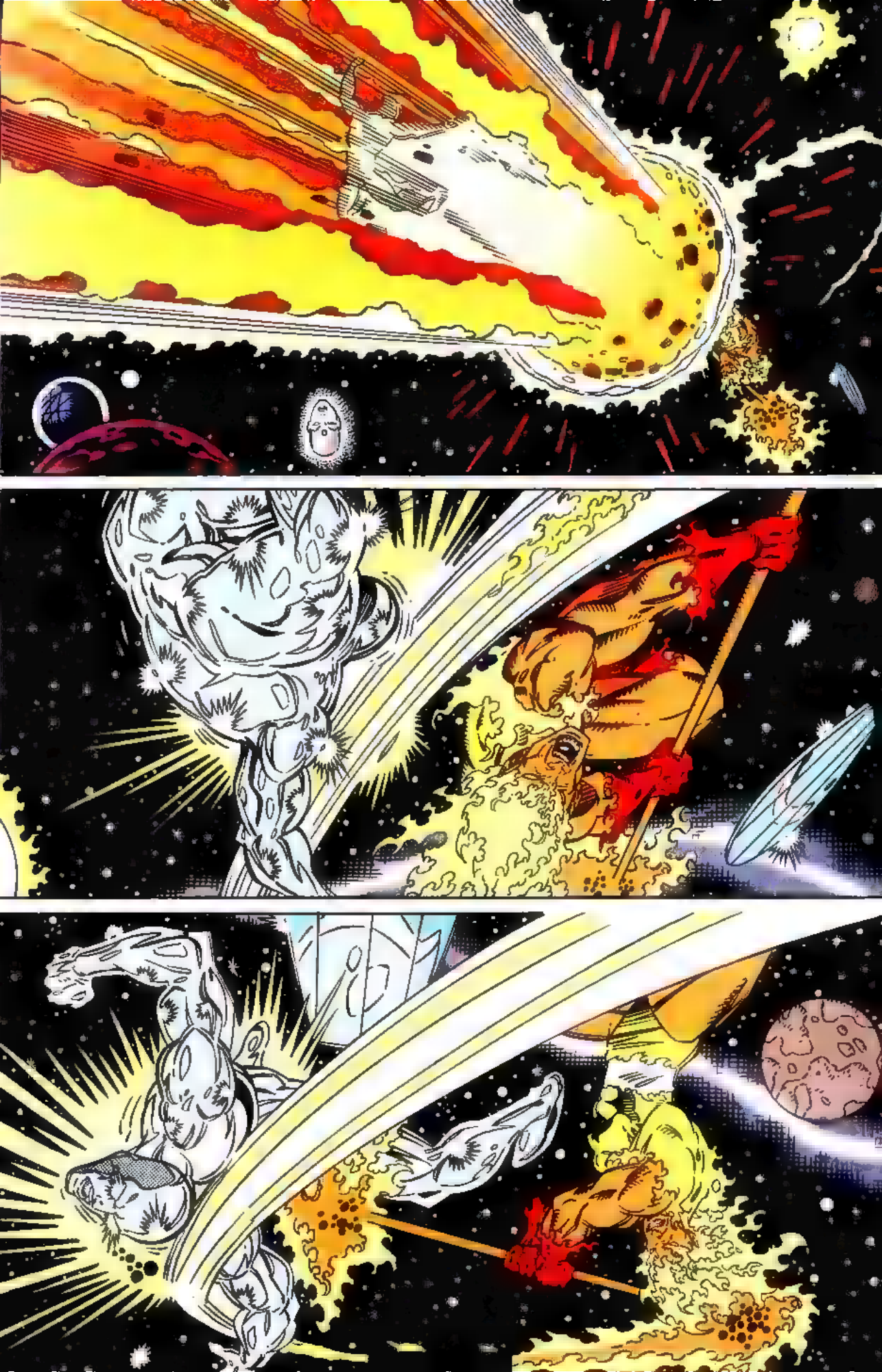
IT'S NO GOOD, MOON-DRAGON.

I'LL NOT BE WHIPPED INTO LINE BY SOME LACKEY.

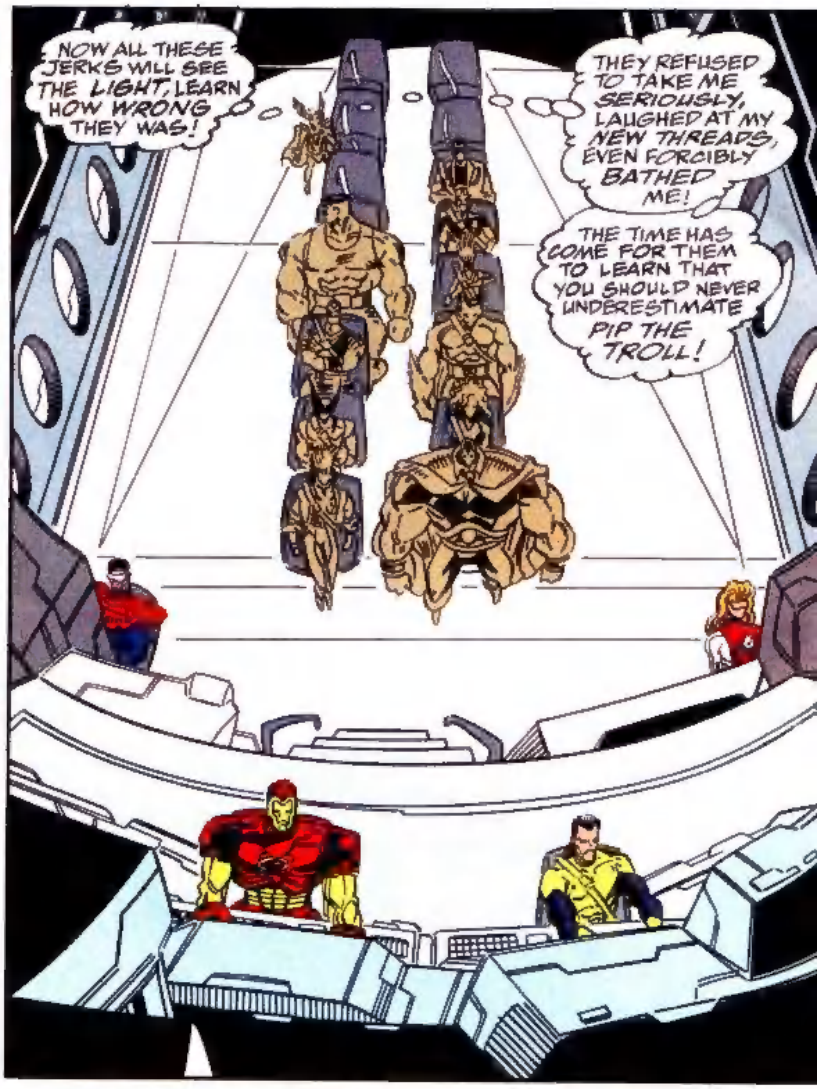

PERHAPS IT WAS GALACTUS'S PAST TAMPERING WITH MY SOUL...
...OR MAYBE THE POWER COSMIC...
...OR PERHAPS JUST MY OWN STRENGTH OF WILL WHICH DID IT.

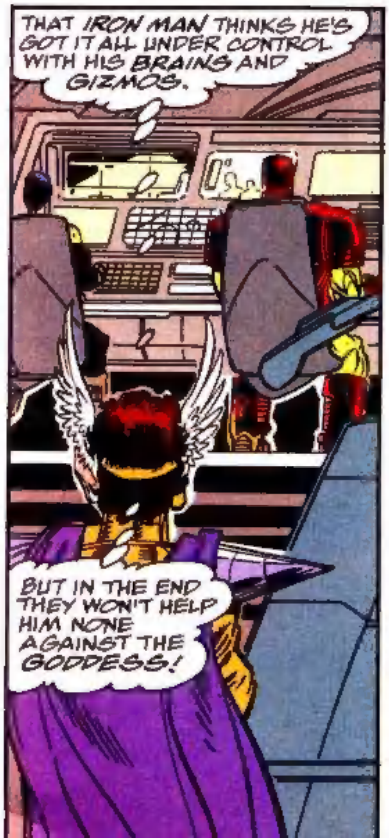

BUT THE SPELL IS BROKEN!
I AM NO LONGER THE THRALL TO THE GODDESS'S MANIPULATIONS!
THE SILVER SURFER IS ONCE AGAIN HIS OWN MAN!


YOU MAY BE RID OF HER CONTROL, INFIDEL, BUT YOU WILL NEVER ESCAPE THE GODDESS'S INFLUENCE.
HUH?

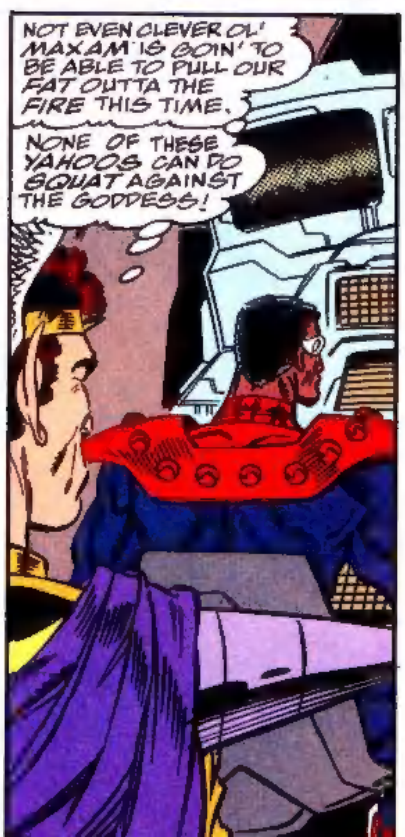


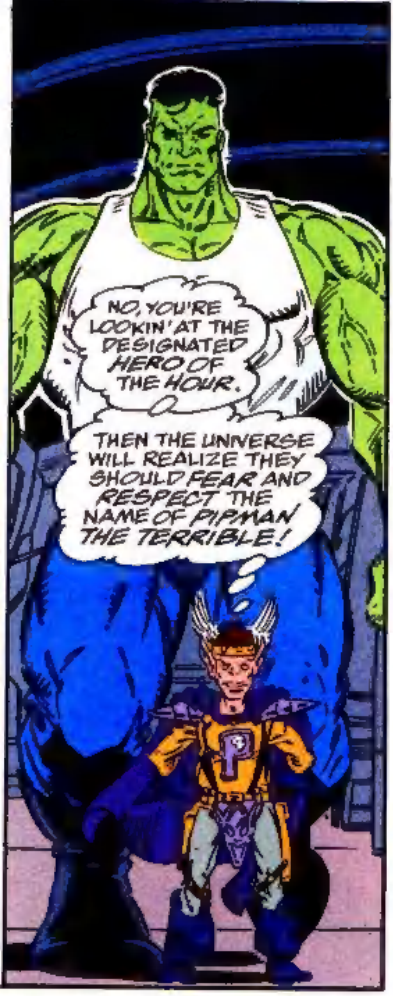
TO DENY ONE'S CELESTIAL DESTINY IS TO COURT DESTRUC-TION.


NOW ALL THESE JERKS WILL SEE THE LIGHT, LEARN HOW WRONG THEY WAS!
THEY REFUSED TO TAKE ME SERIOUSLY, LAUGHED AT MY NEW THREADS, EVEN FORCIBLY BATHED ME!
THE TIME HAS COME FOR THEM TO LEARN THAT YOU SHOULD NEVER UNDERESTIMATE PIP THE TROLL!


THAT IRON MAN THINKS HE'S GOT IT ALL UNDER CONTROL WITH HIS BRAINS AND GIZMOS.
BUT IN THE END THEY WON'T HELP HIM NONE AGAINST THE GODDESS!

THAT WALKIN' MUSCLE, THE HULK, THINKS HE CAN JUST POUND ANY PROBLEM INTO A SOLUTION.
WRONG.


NOT EVEN CLEVER OL' MAXAM IS GOIN' TO BE ABLE TO PULL OUR FAT OUTTA THE FIRE THIS TIME.
NONE OF THESE YAHOOS CAN DO SQUAT AGAINST THE GODDESS!

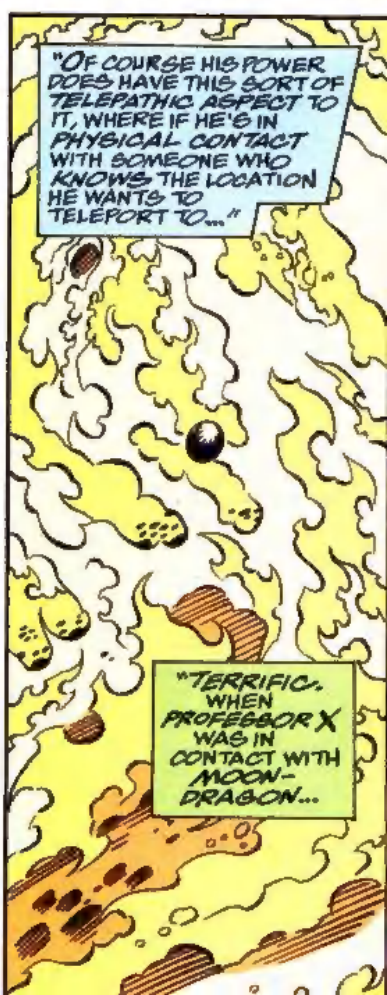

NO, YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT THE DESIGNATED HERO OF THE HOUR.
THEN THE UNIVERSE WILL REALIZE THEY SHOULD FEAR AND RESPECT THE NAME OF PIPMAN THE TERRIBLE!

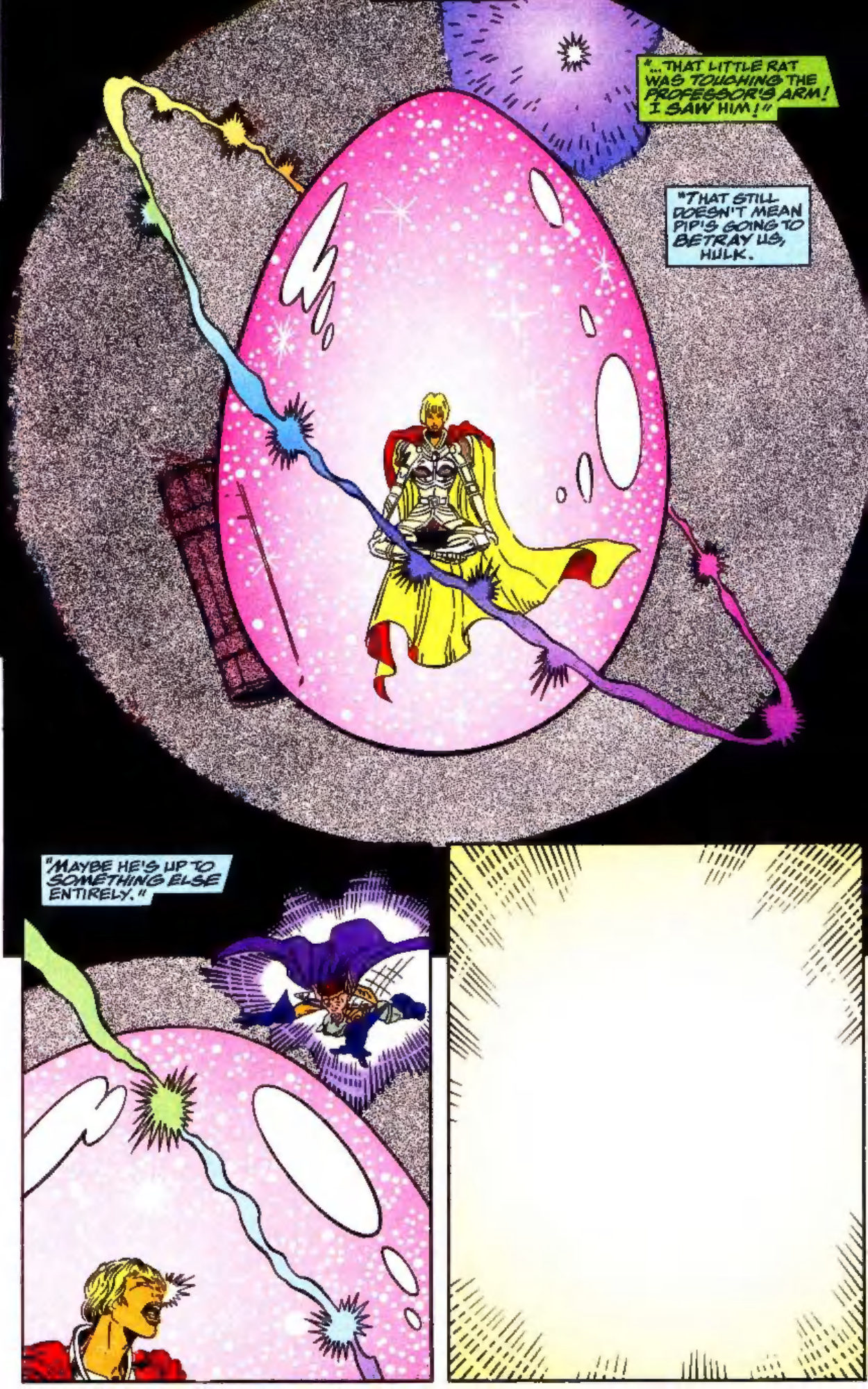
I KNEW IT! I JUST KNEW THAT LITTLE MANIAC WAS UP TO SOMETHING!

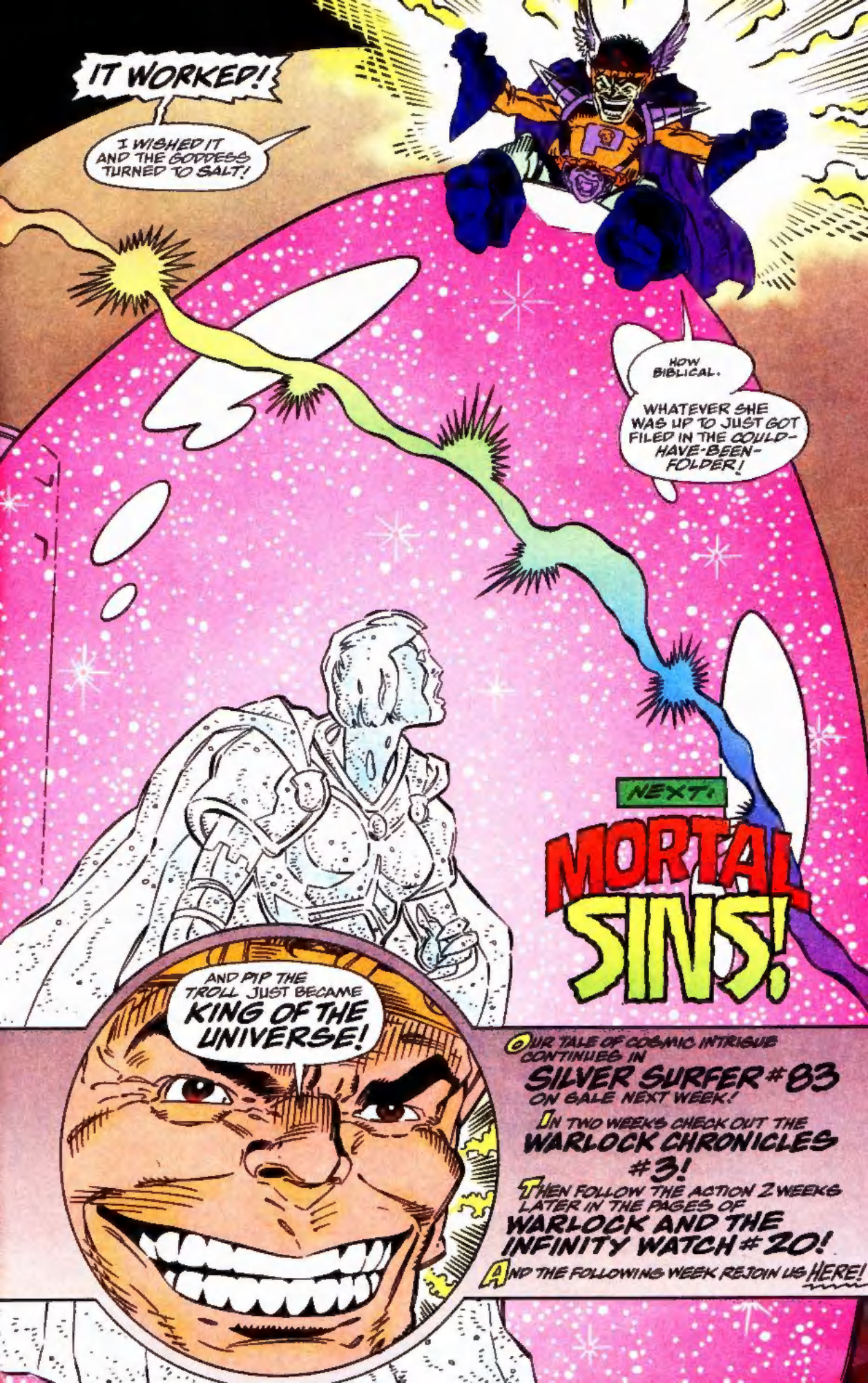
BUT WHAT?
TROUBLE FOR US--IF PAST EXPERIENCE IS ANY INDICATION.
I SHOULD'VE DROWNED HIM IN THE BATHTUB WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE.

"I WOULDN'T LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER HIS DESERTION, HULK. PIP WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN MUCH HELP IN THE UPCOMING BATTLE."
"BUT I WONDER IF HE'LL DECIDE TO WARN THE GODDESS THAT WE'RE COMING?"

"THAT'S RIGHT! COULDN'T HE TELEPORT TO PARADISE OMEGA, MAXAM?"
"MOONDRAGON TOLD ME HE CAN'T ZAP TO ANY PLACE HE'S NEVER BEEN, SHE-HULK. THAT'S WHY WE'RE USING THESE QUINJETS.


"OF COURSE HIS POWER DOES HAVE THIS SORT OF TELEPATHIC ASPECT TO IT, WHERE IF HE'S IN PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE LOCATION HE WANTS TO TELEPORT TO..."
"TERRIFIC. WHEN PROFESSOR X WAS IN CONTACT WITH MOONDRAGON...


"...THAT LITTLE RAT WAS TOUCHING THE PROFESSOR'S ARM! I SAW HIM!"
"THAT STILL DOESN'T MEAN PIP'S GOING TO BETRAY US, HULK.
"MAYBE HE'S UP TO SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY."


IT WORKED!
I WISHED IT AND THE GODDESS TURNED TO SALT!
HOW BIBLICAL.
WHATEVER SHE WAS UP TO JUST GOT FILED IN THE COULD-HAVE-BEEN-FOLDER!
NEXT:
MORTAL SINS!
AND PIP THE TROLL JUST BECAME KING OF THE UNIVERSE!
OUR TALE OF COSMIC INTRIGUE CONTINUES IN SILVER SURFER #83 ON SALE NEXT WEEK!
IN TWO WEEKS CHECK OUT THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES #3!
THEN FOLLOW THE ACTION 2 WEEKS LATER IN THE PAGES OF WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH #20!
AND THE FOLLOWING WEEK REJOIN US HERE!